Significance of the Tantric Tradition



Arddhanārīśvara

—Kamalakar Mishra

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Dedicated as a token of love and gratitude

to

Mahamahopadhyaya Acharya Pt. Rameshwar Jha

at whose feet I studied the original

texts of the Tantric tradition.

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FOREWORD

The Tantra-tradition is as important as any other tradition in Indian Philosophy. But unfortunately it has not yet received the same attention from scholars as other traditions have. Therefore, any publication on the Tantric tradition should be a welcome addition to the literature on the subject, specially if it is by a competent author. The present author, Shri Kamalakar Mishra, seems to be qualified for writing on Tantra in three ways. First of all, he is deeply convinced of the truth of the tradition; it looks as if he belongs to it temperamentally. This is an essential qualification, because only one who is convinced can hope to convince others. Secondly, he knows Sanskrit so well that he can follow the texts independently. But he has not depended on himself alone; he has actually studied the texts (and this is his third qualification) under a very competent and renowned teacher, Shri Rameshwar Jha. Shri Mishra has also had the good fortune of studying Indian Philosophy in general and Advaita Vedānta in particular under one of the most eminent scholars like Prof. T. R. V. Murti.

Shri Mishra has established his reputation as an excellent teacher. Clear and coherent in thought, he can express himself very well. But this was not known to the world of scholars as he did not have any book published so far. I am glad that this book will bring into lime light his sound scholarship, coherent thinking and capacity for clear presentation. I am sure that those interested in Tantra will look upon this book as an excellent addition to their library.

In this small book, it was certainly not possible for the author to consider the whole of the Tantric tradition. But the value of the book lies specially in the fact that the author has taken up some very knotty problems of the Tantric tradition. His treatment of those problems and his clarification of certain concepts is remarkable. Probably it is for the first time that the Tantric tradition has been explained in this cogent and consistent manner.

I may, for example, draw attention to his exposition of the concept of Svātantrya (freedom) and also to the distinction he draws between Karma and Kriyā. Freedom means neither volition nor mechanical activity, but spontaneity. Similarly Kriyā being spontaneous is different from Karma which is volitional. Further the author rightly emphasizes that self-consciousness (*Ahaṁ-vimarśa*) does not necessarily imply duality; it is possible even in the non-dual Śiva, as accepted in the Tantric tradition. Mr. Mishra's attempt to clarify the logic of self-consciousness in the Tantric position, namely, the logic of Kriyā, is commendable. Lest I take too much space, I should stop here and not discuss any problem in detail.

It is remarkable that in his very first attempt Shri Mishra has attained a high degree of excellence and he should be congratulated. There is no doubt that he has earned the gratitude of scholars by giving such a clear, coherent and cogent account of a difficult tradition of thought. We now expect something more from him and let us hope that he will not disappoint us. I wish him all success.

Varanasi,—21 .7. 1981

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PREFACE

Although the contribution of the *Tantra* to Indian philosophy and culture is of immense significance, little work has been done in this field. Moreover, the *Tantra* (or *Āgama*) has something very significant and relevant to say to the modern man. With its positive attitude towards the world and with a variety of yogic *sādhanās* for improving man in all respects, the *Tantra* carries a promise of help to man in his present predicament. This warrants exposition and elucidation of the *Tantric* insight.

The mystic language of the *Tantras* and a rich symbolism found therein presents certain difficulties in the exposition of the Tantric thought. Abhinavagupta, the principal philosopher of the *Kāśmīra Śaiva* School, seems to have overcome these difficulties; he has made a systematic and rational presentation of the Tantric wisdom in his famous work, *Tantrāloka*. Our present work is an attempt to understand the Tantric position mainly in the light of the *Tantrāloka*.

Though Abhinavagupta seems to have unravelled the knots of the Tantric philosophy and religion, yet much is left out (even in Abhinavagupta himself) to be further clarified and spelt out. This is why among the Tantric scholars there seems to be difference of opinion, rather an ambiguity, regarding the correct position of the Tantric thought. Our endeavour in the present work is to spell out implicit ideas, to make explicit the inner thread of logic of the Tantric system, and to fill up the missing gaps if possible. In this attempt some views might have emerged which may appear to the reader as new and original; but we submit nothing is really new, everything is present (may be implicitly) in the Tantric position. For example, we have tried to present the rationale or the underlying logic of the *Vāma-mārga* (or *Kaula-sādhanā*) specially with regard to sex. In this connection we have tried to bring out the implicit object of the said *sādhanā*. All this may apparently seem to be our own; but actually this can be clearly read between the lines in the *Tantra*; we have tried simply to make it explicit. What may, at the most, be considered to be our own, is that we

have tried to supply the apparently missing links; but that too is purely on the basis of the Tantric thought.

In a small book like this, our aim is not to present an exposition of the Tantric thought so much as to point out its significance. We are trying to justify the Tantric position from the rational point of view, to find out the rationale of the abstruse Tantric *sādhanās* and to trace out and clarify the inner thread of logic running through the entire system of thought.

At places in our discussion the *Advaita-Vedāntin* appears as the chief opponent (*pūrvapakṣin*) for the simple reason that some of the basic principles of the Tantric system are questioned and contradicted by the Advaitin. In defence the Tantrist would not only justify himself but in turn would also counter-question the Advaitin. Our aim at those places is not to enter into polemics and refute the Advaitin, but our aim is simply to clarify our own position; and we hope the Advaitins will take our criticisms in that spirit.

We confess that in our present short work many topics of the Tantric system are left out. But this is because it is not possible to consider the whole of the Tantric tradition in its completeness in such a small book. We have attempted to highlight the most essential and striking points and to clarify the key-ideas of the system. In the appendix, however, a few more topics are discussed in brief. (We hope to present a more comprehensive treatment of the Tantric tradition in a future work under preparation).

We want to make an apology about the language and the style of the present work. We have tried to make the language and the style as easy as possible, so that what we want to convey to the reader should be easily grasped by him; there should be little mental effort on the part of the reader in understanding our contentions. As a result, the language sometimes appears to be lacking in gravity, it becomes class-room language. This cannot be helped, as our object is to convey the thought in the easiest manner. The learned reader will pay attention on *what* we want to say; he will not mind *how* we say it.

Some repetitions have occurred; this could not be helped as this was indispensable for the sake of clarity.

We invite comment and suggestions from our learned readers so that the work may be improved in the next edition.

K. M·

List of Abbreviations

BG	Bhagavadgītā
IPK	Īśvara-pratyabhijñā-kārikā
IPV	Īśvara-pratyabhijñā-vimarśinī
KT	Kulārṇava-tantra
MVT	Mālinī-vijaya-tantra
NT	Netra-tantra
PH	Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam
PTK	Parātriṁśikā-kārikā
PTV	Parātriṁśikā-Vivaraṇa
SD	Śivadṛṣṭi
SK	Spanda-kārikā
SS	Śivā-sūtra
ST	Svacchanda-tantra
S Str.	Śivastotrāvali
TA	Tantrāloka
TAV	Tantrāloka (*viveka*)
TS	Tantrasāra
VBT	Vijñāna-bhairava-tantra

ERRATA

Page No.	Line No.	Printed as	To be read as
2	6	encounter against	encounter with
2	3	a subsequently	subsequently a
5	13	why do we	why we do
8	17	tow	two
11	19	encounter against	encounter with
11	22	self-conciouseness	self-consciousness
11	34	word'	word
14	31	Scholiast.	Scholiast,
20	23	in based	is based
20	28	Put if	But if
21	28	theoritical	theoretical
22	20	dircet	direct
23	28	perfeetion	perfection
26	4	recognised has	recognised had
26	6	coveredto	covered to
29	15	mind ? in	mind ? In
29	31	knowledge	knowledge.
29	32	eourse	course
31	6	tion is what	tion is : What
3I	26	my oneness	one's oneness
33	20	perfecty	perfectly
33	30	itself to be	itself for
35	6	indiretly	indirectly
41	9	one *what*	on *what*
43	8	The Nigativistic	The Negativistic
43	13	it has to be	it is to be
44	22	n the contrary	on the contrary
45	5	attiiude	attitude
45	21	Te have	To have
48	17	also say	either say
53	8	coonceived	conceived
54	21	uot hamper	not hamper

55	29	act ivity it	activity is
55	31-32	sense of of	sense of
57	27	tne jñāna-	the jñāna-
59	29	aādhanā	sādhanā
65	1	the bitter	bitter
69	30	good of	good to
72	35	intuned	in tune
74	5	sec	sex
79	10	philophy	philosophy
86	2	*af*	*of*
92	1	of the	on the
92	7	be given	be given .
97	5	iteresting	interesting
111	24	the above	by the above
115	40	if knows	it knows
123	22	स्वमिन्	स्वस्मिन्
135	14	o fany	of any
141	17	vikalpes	vikalpas
144	16	clairvoince	clairvoyance
144	33	with out	without
3	2	Ardhanārīśvara	Arddhanārīśvara
3	6	Ardha-	Arddha-
Cover page		ARDHANĀRĪŚVARA	ARDDHANĀRĪŚVARA

CONTENTS

Part II–The Religious and Cultural Significance of the Tantric Tradition

Part III–Appendix

PART I
Philosophical Significance of the Tantric Tradition

It is popularly believed that almost all the currents of Indian philosophy and religion have originated from the Veda or the Upaniṣad, and that the Vedic tradition forms the basic trend of Indian culture, the Jaina and the Buddhist being in no way away from the mainstream. But little is known about the Āgama or Tantra[1] which has an equally important role in shaping the Indian culture. The Tantric tradition has something very significant to say, and this must be taken into account if we have to form an integral view of Indian philosophy and religion.[2]

Both the Veda (or Nigama) and the Tantra (Āgama) are taken to be revelatory in character, pertaining to the extra-empirical knowledge of Reality. If so, what is the necessity of the Tantra, the Veda already being there ? In other words, the question is : Is the Tantra redundant, or does it have some special significance ? The answer is : side by side with the Veda, the Tantra has special significance; in fact, it is complementary to the Veda.

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1. By Tantra we refer chiefly to the Śaiva Tantras. Moreover, the Tantras are interpreted mainly from the point of view of Kāśmīra Śaivism. Kāśmīra Śaivism is a non-dualistic (abheda) presentation of the Tantric position. Abhinavagupta who is the chief exponent of Kāśmīra Śaivism, has authored a voluminous work entitled 'Tantrāloka' (literally meaning 'the light of the Tantra'), in which he has systematised the philosophy and religion of the Tantra. Our treatment of the Tantric position here is broadly based on the Tantrāloka.
2. Among the rank and file there is a popular misconception about the Tantra and the Tāntrika; it is so believed that in performing Tantric practices one uses mystic formula or Mantra, invokes spirits and mystic deities, and as a result acquires weird powers and uncanny experiences. But this understanding of Tantra is

1. THE KRIYĀ OR ŚAKTI PRINCIPLE.

According to the Upaniṣads, as interpreted by the Advaitin, the ultimate reality which is Consciousness or the Self called Brahman or Ātman, is pure knowledge (jñāna). It is static, so to say, as it is devoid of all activity (niṣkriya). It is also devoid of self-consciousness, as there is no duality there, the Self having no not-self to encounter against. According to the Āgamic tradition, on the contrary, Consciousness (Citi or Saṁvit) or Śiva as it is called, is knowledge (jñāna) and activity (kriyā) both in one. Śiva or the Self is actually Śiva and Śakti or Jñāna and Kriyā or Prakāśa and Vimarśa in one. Śiva and Śakti are *two* only by connotation; by denotation they are one and the same. Śiva or Consciousness is conceived as being dynamic, and the very dynamism of Śiva is called Śakti or Kriyā. A current of water is water and current both in one. The current or flow is not a separate entity, it is just water which is flowing. The word 'flow' is used simply to connote the state of the water, namely, its fluidity. The entity denoted by both the words 'water' and 'flow', is one and the same ; and still we can meaningfully use two words—water and flow. The linguistic usage (namely, that we are using two words) may create the illusion that there are two corresponding entities. All words do not denote entities. The same is true in the case of Śiva and Śakti. The word 'Śakti' is used simply to connote the nature of Śiva or Consciousness. Activity or dynamism (Spanda) is the nature of Śiva, and Śakti is just the name given to this dynamism. Śakti, therefore, is nothing but the nature of Śiva. The symbolisms of Śiva-Śakti cannot and should not be taken literally.

1. The Unity of Śiva-Śakti.

The symbol of Ardhanārīśvara is to suggest the unity of Śiva-Śakti. In the symbol the male (Śiva) and the female (Śakti) are not *two* persons; the person is one and the same, and the same

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obviously naive, for the Tantra has a much wider connotation; it stands for a particular conception of Reality (in the field of philosophy or metaphysics) and a subsequently particular way of life (in the field of religion and culture), mentioned in the following pages.

person is both man and woman or Śiva and Śakti. The symbol of Ardhanārīśvara as in the stone-images and art-pictures, however, is not a perfect one, as in the symbol one half is man (or Śiva) and the other half is woman (or Śakti). But in fact there is no such partition in Reality. The whole of Reality is Śiva, and the whole of it is Śakti as well. Any way, this cannot be helped if Reality is to be expressed in symbol. The stone-statue can be carved only half and half in order to depict both man and woman in one and the same figure ; the whole of the statue cannot be carved to show man and at the same time the whole of it to show woman also. In modern times, however, a particular technique of art has developed where one and the same picture, unitarily and not divisively, shows persons more than one; the same picture—the whole of it---looked from one angle, gives one particular vision, while looked from a slightly different angle, gives another vision. The symbol of Ardhanārīśvara, if pictured in this particular way, would be nearer to Reality symbolised.

2. The symbol of Ardhanārīśvara

The key concept of the Āgamic philosophy is Kriyā[1] or Śakti principle which distinguishes it (the Tantric philosophy) from other systems of thought, specially from the Advaita-Vedānta. All other points of uniqueness and distinction in the Tantric philosophy can be logically derived from this single concept.

3. Kriyā is the key-concept.

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1. The term 'Kriyā' in the Tantric tradition is sometimes used to denote the gross external activity as in the triad of icchā-jñāna-kriyā. But it is also used to denote the general dynamism of Consciousness, technically called Spanda (spontaneity). As against the word jñāna or dṛk (knowledge) the word kriyā (activity) is used ; and the Reality is said to be both together (dṛk-kriyā or jñāna-kriyā).

'स एव हि अहंभावात्मा विमर्शो देवस्य क्रीडादिमयस्य शुद्धे पारमार्थिक्यौ ज्ञानक्रिये, प्रकाशरूपता ज्ञानं तत्रैव स्वातंत्र्यात्मा विमर्शः क्रिया ।

I. P. V-1/8/11 (p. 338)

4. Kriyā is different from voluntary action as well as from mechanical activity.

We give here the concept of Kriyā in brief. In order that we understand the exact nature of Kriyā, it must be distinguished, on the one hand, from the ethical action which is voluntary and effortful, and, on the other hand, from the automatic activity which is mechanical and determined. While performing volitional or ethical action one has to exert one's will or make effort (āyāsa), and so it is not kriyā, as kriyā is effortless (anāyāsa) activity; it is spontaneous or natural (or automatic) so to say. But at the same time it is not like the automata of the reflex action, nor like the mechanical activity of a robot, nor like the obsessional behaviour of a psycho-neurotic, as all these activities are determined and not free. In kriyā there is freedom, as one is not bound to perform the activity; one simply allows the activity to flow, as it were, as it (the activity) is perfectly in tune with oneself. One can, if one likes, check or dismiss the whole process. Kriyā, therefore, has both the merits—freedom and effortlessness (or being automatic or natural). It is, therefore, called spontaneity (spanda). Spanda or Kriyā may be called a kind of natural activity, free and spontaneous.

5. Samples of Kriyā in actual experience.

We may find samples of actual experience in our ordinary life where we can have some inkling of Kriyā. These samples, however, are not the perfect examples of pure Kriyā, but still they can help us to understand the idea of Kriyā. Take the example of joy. When we are extremely joyful, certain jubilant activities like singing, dancing, etc., may automatically flow from us. Or, when per chance we happen to meet, after a long period of parting, some one who is very dear to us, we may spontaneously perform certain joyful activities in his or her welcome. When a child takes to playing, it has no motive; it is quite natural for a child to play We cannot also say that the act of playing is mechanical or determined; it is free and spontaneous on the part of the child. It does not result from some lack or want in the child; it ensues out of the joy and fullness of the child. The child's free play is a mini-replica of the creation of the world out of the joy of the Absolute. A child's natural playing, free

and spontaneous, is an example of kriyā although not very perfect. Such activities are not willfully done ; they spring forth automatically ; yet we feel free while doing them or rather allowing them to occur through us. There is no compulsion on our part, for the activity is not forced on us—neither from external factors nor from internal ones like urges and instincts. It is not the case that we do not like the activity and yet it happens against our will (as in the case of obsessional neurosis).

Such examples of activity, howsoever incomplete they may be, suggest the possibility of a state of Consciousness in which there is spontaneous or automatic activity plus perfect freedom. Hence, Kriyā concept is a legitimate hypothesis, to put it in scientific terms. The reason why do we not find hundred percent pure example of Kriyā in our ordinary life, is, the Tantrist would say, that in ordinary experience the flow of pure Kriyā is obstructed as well as defiled by what is called *mala* (dirt or ignorance); the moment one is perfectly freed from the *mala*, one finds oneself exhibiting perfect currents of pure kriyā. In actual life there is partial kriyā, because there is partial freedom or partial[1] perfection so to say. Pure Kriyā is possible only in the state of perfection that can be found in the life of a jīvanmukta. The imperfect examples of Kriyā in our actual life, anyway, give the inklings of pure Kriyā.

6. Kriyā is different from Karma.

In the Advaita Vedānta and allied systems we do not find distinction between Kriyā and Karma. For the Advaitin all Kriyā seems to be nothing but Karma which is volitional or ethical action. The Tantric philosophers, however, are very careful in using the words Kriyā and Karma. They never equate Kriyā with Karma. In fact, they too like all other Indian philosophers hold that what is called Karma is bondage (Kārma mala), and as such cannot go with jñāna. But Kriyā is entirely

1. By using words like 'partial' and 'complete' perfection we do not mean to suggest that perfection admits of degrees. Perfection here means freedom from wants, which can certainly be partial or complete. Generally, the complete freedom from wants is called perfection.

different from Karma.[1] Kriyā is an independent category, different from Karma. This is the unique contribution of the Tantric tradition. The Advaitin perhaps does not care to take into account such an important aspect of our actual experience.

2. COMPATIBILITY OF KRIYĀ WITH JÑĀNA.

1. The objection that Kriyā is incompatible with perfection.

The Advaitic Scholiast may question the compatibility of Kriyā with Jñāna. We would consider here two possible objections. The Advaitin would say that if Śiva or the Self is taken to be perfect, there can be no Kriyā in Śiva, as Kriyā (or Karma as he would understand it) is the sign of imperfection; we perform action only when there is some want or lack which we want to fulfill. In answer to this it may be pointed out that this objection is valid only with regard to the voluntary action which we call Karma. It is not valid with regard to Kriyā which is spontaneous and natural activity. It is natural in the sense that it is not caused by any motive and there is no exerting of the will also.

2. The objection pertains to Karma and not Kriyā.

Even Gauḍapāda accepts this position when he, while explaining creation, says, 'This (Creation) is the very nature of the Lord; what shall a perfect Being desire"[2] The Advaitin may still ask, if in Śiva there is no need or incentive or motive for doing anything, what shall account for His doings ?" In answer we would say that this is exactly the freedom (svātantrya) of Śiva. Śiva need not do, and yet He does. It is true that Śiva is not compelled to do; but it is equally true that Śiva is not compelled not to do also.

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1. We too while using the English substitute of these words would use 'action' for 'karma' and 'activity' for 'kriyā', although 'activity' is not a very happy translation of Kriyā. In want of a better substitute we use the word Kriyā.

2. Devasyaiṣa svabhāvoyam āptakāmasya kā spṛhā.

--Māṇḍūkya-Kārikā 1/9

If one wants explanation for Śiva's doing, we would say that when Consciousness is free and full, it is natural of Consciousness to overflow in creative activity. This does not also mean that Śiva would be acting (such as Creating the world) all the time. Śiva is free to act, but also free to withhold all activity and sit in silence in Himself enjoying the inner bliss of His nature (svarūpāmarśana). It is natural for a child to burst into playing; but this does not mean that the child is playing all the twenty four hours. Kriyā, therefore, can go with the state of desirelessness or perfection. We would say, on the contrary, that Kriyā or spontaneous activity is possible only when we, even to some extent (or relatively), attain the state of desirelessness. Our statement is substantiated by cases in actual experience. For example, we feel like playing or singing or doing anything of the kind only when we feel (even relatively) free and full.[1] When we are burdened with cares and anxieties, we do not feel like doing so. All the true beautiful artistic creativity spontaneously emanates or overflows in the freedom and fullness of the artist. The artistic creativity is an example (although an imperfect one) of Kriyā. The

3. It is natural for Consciousness to overflow in creative activity

4. Examples of Kriyā in actual experience.

1. It is true that in the examples of Kriyā cited above and earlier we may find some amount of motivation and, therefore, amount of compulsion, as our ordinary activity is tainted with mala (dirt). But the point is that there is at least some amount of motivelessness and freedom which gives rise to Kriyā. Certainly there is considerable difference between (a) a student working hard at his studies in order to pass the examination, and (b) the same student playing joyfully after the examinations are over. In the former case the student has a motive and is compelled to work, whereas in the latter case he is comparatively motiveless and free from compulsion, and yet the activity of playing is there in its full swing. Wherefrom does the activity of playing come? What we want to pinpoint is that there is an amount of freedom and desirelessness which gives rise to such activities.

Upaniṣads also accept this position when they declare, "All these things spring forth from the Bliss itself."[1]

The point is that the desireless perfect State of Consciousness need not be devoid of activity. It is quite possible that one is free from all compulsion, desire and motive, and yet the sparks of joyful activity spring forth from oneself. This is exactly what is meant by Līlā, (play or sport) in the Tantric tradition, and by *'mauja'* (free expression of joyful activity) in the Sufi mystic tradition.

5. Compatibility of 'freedom to' with 'freedom-from'

It is the unity of both the freedoms—'freedom-from' and 'freedom-to'. The Advaitic Scholiast seems to accept the 'freedom-from' and reject the freedom-to', as he finds 'freedom-to' incompatible with 'freedom-from'. The Advaitin would be justified only if the 'freedom-to' is construed in terms of motivated volitional ethical action (Karma). But if the 'freedom-to' is understood in the sense of Kriyā under reference, the tow freedoms—the 'freedom from' and the 'freedom to' are quite compatible.

6. The objection that Jñāna and kriyā are contradictory in nature.

The second objection against the compatibility of Kriyā with jñāna is this–the natures of jñāna and Kriyā are such that the two are opposed to each other; Jñāna is a state of passivity, and, therefore, it cannot go with kriyā or activity which is diametrically opposed to the state of passivity. Moreover, action is subjective (puruṣatantra) while knowledge is objective (vastutantra); they are opposed to each other like light and darkness, as it were. How can these two contradictory connotations, therefore, go together ?

7. Kriyā is both activity and relaxation in one.

In answer to the above objection it may be pointed out that this objection again applies to Karma and not to Kriyā. Kriyā is a state of relaxation and activity both in one. In Kriyā one is not a doer in the effortful voluntary sense, as the activity flows automatically; one has not to exert one's will. The state of Kriyā may be expressed in a paradoxical statement like passive activity or actionless activity or relaxed activity. Such activity is quite compatible with Jñāna.

1. 'Ānandāddhyeva khalvimāni bhūtāni jāyante'.

8. The Indian tradition of actionless activity.

In India there is an old tradition of actionless activity or passive activity. The Gītā refers to this kind of activity at more than one place where it says, "while indulging in activity, he does nothing",[1] "I am the doer of it, yet take me not to be the doer",[2] "the Karmayogin while performing all activity, knows that he is doing nothing",[3] and so on. The Yogavāśiṣṭha too refers to the same when it says, "having artificial willing outside, but inside having no willing at all, move in this world, O Rāghava, being a non-doer within and a doer without;[4] "Move, O Rāghava, being heated (in activity) without and cool within".[5] The mystic saint-poet Kabir says, "all activity is done by me, yet I am away from action[6] ?"

The fact that Kriyā is puruṣa-tantra (subjective) does not disqualify Kriyā for being a consort of Jñāna. Being puruṣa-tantra simply means that one is free in doing. But why on earth this should be contradictory to Jñāna ? There can be contradiction between the two only in the sense that Kriyā (or Karma as the Advaitin would take it) is a sign of imperfection, whereas Jñāna is a state of perfection. This objection we have already met by showing that Kriyā is different from Karma.[7]

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1. 'Karmaṇyabhipravṛttopi naiva kiñcit karoti saḥ.—Gītā 4/20
2. 'Tasya Kartāramapimāṁ viddhyakartāramavyayam Gītā 4/13
3. 'Naiva kiñcit karomīti yukto manyeta tattvavit.'—Gītā 5/8-9
4. 'Bahiḥ kṛtrima saṁrambho hṛdi saṁrambhavarjitaḥ.
   Kartā bahirakartāntar loke vihara rāghava.
5. 'Bahistaptontarāśītaḥ loke vihara rāghava.'
6. 'Saba hi karma hamāre kīye, hama karmana te nyāre ho.'
7. Even the question of freedom in Karma on which the notion of puruṣa-tantra is based, is controversial. While doing action (in the sense of Karma and not Kriyā) we are not free, atleast not completely free, as our action is determined by external and internal factors Even the choice to do or not do or do in a different manner (kartum akartum anyathā vā kartum) is conditioned by the same factors. It is only in Kriyā, on the contrary, that one is free, as there is no determination external or internal whatsoever.

3. JÑĀNA ITSELF IS KRIYĀ.

1. Knowledge is not mere passive reflection.

We may, on behalf of the Tantrist, further point out that it is not only that activity is compatible with Jñāna, but also that Jñāna or knowledge itself is a kind of activity, although an effortless activity. The phenomenon of knowledge is often likened to the reflection of an object, say moon, in a pond, and it is said that just as the pond remains quite passive and irresponsive when the moon is reflected in it, so also does the mind when the object is reflected in it. Though this illustration has some points common with knowledge, yet there is an important difference. There is no positive grasping or understanding of the object on the part of the pond, but the same is not true in the case of knowledge. In knowledge there is a 'grasping' or 'catching', as it were, of the object; and this means that there is a positive involvement on the part of the knower. We 'grasp' or 'catch' the object, although this 'grasping' or 'catching' is quite effortless and passive; and since the 'grasping' is effortless or automatic on the part of the knower, it may be mistaken not to be there at all.

2. Positive 'grasping' on the part of the knower.

The crucial point is that if the positive grasping is not there (as in the case of the pond) ; then it would not be a case of knowledge ; it would only be just like the literal physical reflection.[1] So, the word 'knowing' which is used in language as a verb suggesting some activity, is not a linguistic misnomer; it actually means an activity though an effortless activity.[2]

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1. Prof. S. Barlingey in his learned paper 'Saṁjñātatā (संज्ञातता)' has analysed the knowledge situation and has tried to make it clear that knowing is not a mere passive state of mind, but it involves activity on the part of the knower ; it is not just like the reflection in a pond. I am thankful to Prof. Barlingey who has been my source of learning this brilliant idea.
2. In the Indian grammerian tradition of Pāṇini no sharp distinction is drawn between the verbs 'knowing' and 'doing'. This is so, not because they are unaware of the distinction, but because they are aware of a deeper truth that the two

3. Light is a continuous process of self-illumination.

Since consciousness or illumination (cit) is also an activity, it is, in the Āgamic tradition, called 'Cit-śakti'. Even so, the self-illumined physical light which is used as an analogy for consciousness, may be understood not merely as a substance or entity but also as an automatic natural illumining process; light is a continuous activity of self-illumination.

4. KRIYĀ AS THE LOGIC OF SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS.

1. Awareness of the not-self is the Advaitic logic of self-consciousness.

The Self-consciousness of Śiva or pure Self is again a significant point in the Tantric tradition. It is the Kriyā principle which explains the self-consciousness in the absolutely non-dual Self. The Advaita-Vedāntic logic of self-consciousness pertains to the awareness of the not-self. According to the Advaitin, I can be aware of myself only when I am aware of or encounter the not-I. Self-consciousness, therefore, is essentially based on the distinction of the Self from the non-self. Brahman which is a state of pure non-duality, and which has no 'other' to encounter against, can have no self-consciousness. The Advaitin's objection, therefore, would be that either Śiva admits of duality, or (if Śiva is purely non-dual) there can be no self-consciouseness in Śiva.

2. Kriyā is the Āgamic logic of self-consciousness.

In answer it may be pointed out from the side of the Tantrist that awareness of the not-self is not the only or necessary occasion or condition for self-consciousness; there could be another explanation as well. Not-I becomes a necessary condition only when I have to distinguish myself from others; when I have to know my mere existence and have not to differentiate myself from others, I need not be aware of others. What then would be the occasion for being aware of myself? The occasion or explanation is Kriyā. Self-consciousness (called

are not dichotomous. This is true in many other cases of verbs also. It is said, for example, the word' 'to exist' or 'to be' (अस् *as*) is to be used in the sense of 'to become' (भुवि bhuvi) ; and to 'become' (भू bhū) in the sense of 'to be' (अस् भुवि भू सत्तायाम्—as bhuvi bhū sattāyām).

aham-vimarśa or simply 'aham' or 'ahantā') is an activity or kriyā of consciousness, something like an eternal rippling in the ocean of Consciousness. And this is possible even when the non-dual Self alone exists without duality of the not-self. This natural effulgence or vibration (spanda) of consciousness makes it aware of itself, as it were.

3. Self-consciousness is the nature of Consciousness.

Aham-vimarśa (self-consciousness) is the first and the foremost Kriyā or spanda, and it is the very nature of Consciousness (Śiva), and therefore, it is eternal (nitya). Ahaṁvimarśa is the svarūpa of the Self or Śiva, whereas the triad of Icchā-Jñāna-Kriyā which pertains to the creation of the world, is the free manifestation of Śiva. To use the Advaitic terminology, the triad of Icchā-Jñāna-Kriyā is the taṭastha-lakṣaṇa of Śiva, whereas Ahaṁ-vimarśa would be the svarūpa-lakṣaṇa. Self-consciousness, therefore, is the very nature of consciousness ; it is the natural Kriyā or vimarśa of consciousness just as self-illumination is the very nature of light.

4. The term 'I' can be used in the absolute sense also.

The Advaitin may again say that the very awareness of 'I' implies the awareness of the not-I, as 'I' is a relative term like 'son' or 'father'; to know a person as son is also to know him as being fathered by someone. In answer it may be pointed out that the term 'I' has actually two uses—the relative and the absolute. It is only in the relative use (that is, when I have to differentiate myself from others and say, 'I am not this or that') that the awareness of the not-self is implied. But in the absolute use of 'I' (that is, when I have merely to know my existence or being and simply say, 'I am'), there need not be the not-I. Ordinarily, I find myself placed side by side with others, and whenever I think of myself, I cannot help thinking of others ; I have become so habituated that I believe that I cannot think of myself without others, or that 'I' is a relative term. But this is because I am in this predicament. Logically it is quite possible to be aware of oneself (as in the case of Śiva) without the others. In other words, it is logically possible to have an absolute use of the term 'I'.

The point is that the awareness of the not-self is not the only logic of self-consciousness ; there could well be alternative logic of the same. In the Tantric tradition we find alternative logic of self-consciousness, namely, the logic of Kriyā. Our contention could be likened to saying that in order to become healthy one need not necessarily follow the way of taking medicines ; there may be other alternatives to medicine as well. say, yogic exercise. The Advaitin cannot use the alternative logic of Kriyā, as he does not accept Kriyā in Brahman; and he, in the absence of duality in Brahman, therefore, reduces Brahman to a state absolutely devoid of self-consciousness. That is why the Advaitin is very fond of using the analogy of sleep.

5. Kriyā is the alternative logic of self-consciousness.

5. THE AXIOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE.

The Tantrist would retort to the Advaita-Vedāntin that if Brahman or Consciousness is deprived of Kriyā and self-consciousness, then it loses its real beauty and virtually becomes no better than the unconscious jaḍa. It would seem funny to think that the Self or Consciousness, if fully awake, could be devoid of self-consciousness. It sounds self-contradictory that Brahma-jñāna is Self-knowledge (ātma-jñāna) and yet there is no self-consciousness. In the absence of self-consciousness Brahman literally becomes like the physical light which is self-illumined but not self-conscious. Brahman becomes in the words of Radhakrishnan[1] "a bloodless Absolute dark with the excess of light". To quote Radhakrishnan again, "The Absolute of Śaṁkara,[2] rigid, motionless, and totally lacking in initiative or influence, cannot call forth our worship. Like the Taj Mahal, which is unconscious of the admiration it arouses, the Absolute remains indifferent to the fear and love of its worshippers, and for all those who regard the goal of religion as the goal of philosophy – to know the real – Śaṁkara's view seems to be a finished example of learned error."[3]

1. In the absence of self-consciousness the Self would become like matter.

1. Radhakrishnan : Indian Philosophy Vol. II P. 659.

2. Ibid p. 659

3. Here we may comment and add that upto Śaṁkara the problem

2. The axiological difficulty in the Brahman of the Scholastic Vedānta.

Considered from the axiological and spiritual point of view, the Absolute devoid of Kriyā and self-consciousness becomes unintelligible. There can be no experince of ānanda (joy or bliss) without self-consciousness, nor can there be even ānanda itself, as ānanda is the inner Kriyā or spanda of Consciousness. One begins to wonder if such an Absolute, unconscious of itself, can be a value of life, much less the highest value, and whether such an Absolute is what is meant in the Upaniṣads. In the Upaniṣads the axiological and spiritual interest is supreme; the emphasis is on 'ānandaṁ Brahma' (bliss is Brahman); Brahman is time and again said to be the highest value of life. But in the Advaitic Sholasticism the epistemological and ontological interest seems to reign surpreme; the spiritual aspect becomes auxiliary. The Upaniṣadic Brahman in the hands of the Advaitic Scholiasts (perhaps with the only exception of Vidyāraṇya) seems to lose its axiological significance. The reason why the Advaitic Scholiast does not see the difficulty in an ice-like cold Brahman and remains quite satisfied and unperturbed with the notion of a 'motionless' Brahman devoid of Self-consciousness, is, it seems, that he does not perhaps seriously consider the issue from the axiological point of view at all. This is injustice to the Upaniṣadic Brahman; and one may venture to point out that such a frigid and abstract view of the Absolute is really un-Upaniṣadic. The Upaniṣads present a living philosophy.

3. The Scholastic Vedānta is 'inauthentic'.

To use the terminology of the Existentialist, the Upaniṣadic Philosophy is 'praxis'; it is all through 'authentic'. There are occasions when Upaniṣadic thought becomes abstruse and abstract, but the running thread of 'authenticity' is never lost. However, when we come to the Scholiast, we find much of this authenticity is lost; it no longer remains a living

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does not arise very much. His treatment of the Absolute is such that it could also be interpreted in a positive way. It is only the post-Śaṁkara scholiasts in whom the fully abstract and negative picture of Brahman comes out. The potentiality of such a position, however, is very much present in Śaṁkara.

philosophy. Some of the scholastic texts (like the Khaṇḍana Khaṇḍakhādya of Śrī Harṣa) are authored with the explicit purpose of sharpening the intellect in order to defeat the opponent in śāstrārtha.[1] Even the Sāṁkhya system, though mainly negativistic in approach, is 'praxis'; but the scholastic Advaitism seems to be otherwise. Āgamic philosophy developed in any of its shades is mainly a 'praxis', on the contrary.[2]

6. ĀNANDA IS KRIYĀ.

A significant insight of the Āgamic tradition is that ānanda or joy is really kriyā or spanda. Ānanda is not a static state of consciousness. It is rather a flow of consciousness, as it were. This flow or motion may be an inward flow, a flow within consciousness itself. This may sometimes express itself in the outward flow of creative activity also. When we are in a state of inner contentment and do not do anything, even then there is an inward silent flow of consciousness. This particular state of ānanda is symbolically expressed in the smile of Lord Śaṁkara in the Śāmbhavī mudrā. The outward flow of ānanda is expressed in the form of the cosmic dance of creation, the symbolic Nṛtya (dance) of the Naṭarāja (Śiva). The point is that ānanda in any form is Kriyā. That is why ānanda is called the ānanda-śakti.

7. LĪLĀVĀDA AS AGAINST MĀYĀVĀDA.

It is the Kriyā-principle again which explains the manifestation of Śiva in the form of the world. Out of the joy of Śiva the creative activity of world-manifestation takes place. The creation, therefore, is taken to be the līlā or sport of Śiva. This means that in the Tantric tradition there is a positive atttitude

1. धीरा यथोक्तमपि कीरवदेतदुक्त्वा
लोकेषु दिग्विजय कौतुकमातनुध्वम् ।
-Khaṇḍana Khaṇḍa Khādya 1/3

2. There is an implicit claim among the Āgamic philosophers and sometimes it finds explicit expression, that their philosophy is akin to the Upaniṣadic position. The Āgamic tradition, they believe, completes and complements the Vedic and Upaniṣadic tradition by making explicit what is left implicit in the Vedas and Upaniṣads.

towards Creation. In the scholastic Advaitism, on the contrary, the attitude is to negate the world, to totally disconnect Brahman from the world-process. Brahman, they would say, is not actively involved in the creation of the world, for Brahman is inactive (nişkriya) ; the world is a super-imposition on Brahman like the rope-snake created by Avidyā, Brahman being quite unconcerned.

1. Brahman should be taken to be an active creator of the world-appeara-nce.

The Tantrist would say that even if the world is taken to be an appearance, it must positively belong to Brahman, and Brahman must be actively involved in creating the world-appeara-nce ; otherwise, Avidyā which is responsible for the creation of the world-illusion, would become an independent power like the Prakṛti of Sāṁkhya. If the world is an illusion, Brahman must be conce-ived as a magician (aindrajālika) who actively creates the magic-show The problem cannot also be solved by making Īśvara the real magician and bifurcating or differentiating Him from Brahman; for in that case Īśvara together with His magical power would become independent reality different from Brahman.

2. Creation as the Unmeṣa of Śiva

Kāśmīra Śaivism (which is the major philosophical system in the Tantric tradition) too maintains that the world is an appearance (ābhāsa); but this appearance is an active and conscious projection or ideation (vimarśa) of the Śiva-mind. Creation and dissolution are conceived as spontaneous outward overflowing (unmeṣa) and recoiling or inflowing (nimeṣa) of Śiva respectively.

This is like the ocean overflowing in the high tide (unmeṣa) However, this simile does not fit completely, as there is an im-portant difference between the tide of the ocean and unmeṣa of Śiva. The tiding of the ocean is mechanical and is conditioned by the factors of nature, whereas the unmeṣa and nimeṣa of Śiva are perfectly free activity.

The crucial point is, the Tantrist would point out, that the world should be regarded as positive manifestation of, and not merely a super-imposition on, Brahman; otherwise the duality and polarity between Brahman and Māyā connot be overcome.

If the world is false, it should be taken as an imaginary projection or a conscious dream of the Parabrahman, and not merely as super-imposition on Brahman from outside. The correct analogy, he would insist, should be that of the conscious dream rather than the rope-snake.[1] The non-duality of the Absolute can be saved by involving the Absolute in active self-manifestation in the form of the world. The Upaniṣads clearly state this position when they declare, "Where from all these things are born",[2] "All these things spring forth from the Bliss itself",[3] "He desired—I am alone, let myself become many",[4] and so on. One need not and cannot explain these Upaniṣadic utterances away by calling them fables (ākhyāyikā) devised by the Upaniṣadic seer in order to satisfy the unanswerable question of the seeker regarding creation.

3. Conscious dream rather than rope-snake is the correct analogy.

The Tantrist (who himself may be an ābhāsavādin—idealist), in place of calling the world a negation of or super-imposition on Śiva, would prefer to call it the self-created līlā or sport of Śiva. He too negates the

4. Negation by sublimation.

1. The benefit of the rope-snake analogy, which the Advaitin is so fond of, is that the rope is not actively involved in the creation of the snake-illusion; the rope lies unconcerned, the snake being superimposed from outside. Kāśmīra Śaivism would point out that this analogy does not fit in the case of Brahman or Śiva. In the case of rope-snake the illusion is possible even when the rope is not actively involved, because there is duality there; the rope is different from the illusioned person who falls outside the rope. But in the case of Brahman who is non-dual Reality, there is nobody else to project the world-illusion from outside (or if there is, there would be two realities as in the case of rope-snake). The world-illusion, therefore, is a kind of self-projection on the part of Brahman. This is more appropriately illustrated in the case of the conscious dream, and hence the dream-analogy is favoured in Kāśmīra Śaivism.

2. 'Yato väimâni bhūtāni jāyante.'

3. 'Ānandāddhyeva khalvimāni bhūtáni jāyante.

4. 'Saikṣat ekoham bahusyāṁ....

world; there could be no Absolutism without negation in some form or other; but he negates or transcends the world not by denying it as non- Śiva, but by accepting it as the very form of Śiva. He negates or transcends the world by making the world Śiva, as it were. The world becomes Śiva, so to say. This is like negating the waves of the ocean not by calling them unreal, but by taking them as ocean itself—the free rippling of the ocean. This is divinisation of the world. This is negation by sublimation. Utpala Deva says,[1] "one who has become one with the universal Self and knows 'all this is my own glory', remains in Śivahood even in the face of prevailing determinations (or limitations)".[2]

Negation implies correction of some illusion. In the case of dream-experience[3] the dreamer takes the dream-object to be a real material entity, independent of his mind; he does not take it to be an ideal projection (ābhāsa) of his own consciousness. This is illusion, and this has to be corrected or negated. When, after waking up, this illusion is corrected, he does not deny that he had the dream-experience or 'saw' the dream-objects, he simply realises that what he 'saw' was a mental projection *of* and *within* his own

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1. सर्वोममायं विभव इत्येवं परिजानत:
विश्वात्मनो विकल्पानां प्रसरेऽपि महेशता ॥

--Īśvara-pratyabhijñā 4/1/12

2. The conception that the world is a līlā of the Lord or that it is an outcome of the joy of Śiva, presents certain serious problems regarding the suffering and evil which is so conspicuosly present in the world. We shall deal it in a later treatise, 'the Problem of Evil'.

3. The analogy (dṛṣṭānta) of dream is, however, incomplete in picturing the truth (dārṣṭānta), as the dream-object vanishes in the waking state; in the state of Mukti the world does not vanish. A more befitting analogy is that of reflection in a mirror, when a child sees his reflection in a mirror, he takes it not as *his reflection* but as different and independent thing; when he grows up, he still sees the reflection, but now he realises that the reflection is that of his own, and, therefore, is one with himself. Similarly, the realised person sees the world, but he sees it as one with himself.

consciousness, and not an independent material entity outside his own self. What is negated or rejected as false or illusory is the dream-object as a *material entity different from and independent of the knower*. The dream object is not mere nothing like a barren woman's son (*bandhyā putra*) or sky-flower (ākāśakusuma) ; it is ābhāsa (appearance or projection of consciousness) and in this sense it is real (That is why Abhinavagupta calls ābhāsa real). The dreamer later on also realises that what he 'saw' in the dream as different from himself was really one with himself. Similarly, in the state of self-realisation (Ātmajñāna or Śivajñāna) what is negated as false is the world as different from one-self ; it is accepted as one with oneself. In the Tantric thought the sense of duality (bheda or dvaita) is falsity, and realisation of oneness (abheda or advaita) is truth.[1]

8. PROPER EMPHASIS ON IMMANENCE.

From the above position it would be easy to understand why in the Tantric tradition there is repeated emphasis on the immanence of Śiva. Śiva is said to be manifest in the form of the universe (Viśvamaya). In the Upaniṣads both the aspects of Reality—transcendent and immanent—are explicitly mentioned. Brahman is said to be immanent (sarvaṁ khalvidaṁ Brahma) as well as transcendent (neti neti); but the emphasis is tilted on the side of transcendence, and the Advaitins have developed the logic of transcendence to its fullness. In the Āgamas too both the aspects are explicit; Śiva is said to be viśvamaya as well as viśvottīrṇa (transcendent to world). But they seem to be specially fond of glorifying the immanent aspect, just as the Upaniṣadic seer is care-

1. The question of negation is related to the theory of errror. Kāśmīra Śaivism explains the case of error as an incomplete perception of truth (apūrṇakhyāti). The dream-experience is not completely false, as appearance or projection part of it is still real, and therefore it should be called incomplete (apūrṇa) rather than false (mithyā). When in the waking state the dream-object is known as self-projection, then it is complete knowledge. Likewise in the state of bondage our knowledge of the world is incomplete; in the state of Mukti it becomes complete, as the truth of the world is seen in its full perspective.

fully eager to point out the transcendence. Here again the Āgamic position serves to complement the Upaniṣadic one.

Reality is both transcendent and immanent, and a proper balance must be maintained. The Upaniṣads themselves, though emphasizing the transcendent, never lose sight of the immanence of Brahman. But in the system of Advaita-Vedānta the transcendence of Brahman is sometimes emphasized with such a logical zeal that it may create the impression of the world being left out of the periphery of Brahman. The Tantric emphasis on immanence is significant in this context.

9. ĀGAMA AS THE EXPERIENTIAL BASIS OF PHILOSOPHY

1. Āgamana and Nigamana.

Āgamic tradition is based not on speculative ground, but it claims to be based on actual experience. Abhinavagupta calls it the 'tradition of experience' (anubhava-sampradāya).[1] Āgama or *āgamana* literally means induction as against Nigama (Veda) or *nigamana* which means deduction. The statements of the Veda or Śruti are revealed ones, and, therefore, they are to be taken as accepted premises from which deduction (nigamana) would follow. Āgama or Tantra, on the contrary, is based on the evidence of the seers and yogins. It is really a yogic tradition. Induction does not mean sense-expeience in particular, as the Scientific method presupposes, but it means all experience in general. Since Āgama in based on experience, it can broadly be called 'science'. The term 'science' should be used primarily for experience in general and not sense-experience alone. The empirical science is confined to sense-experience not because it is bound to be so by definition (it is not), but because it knows no other mode of experience. But if some other mode of experience is found to be there, there should be no objection from the side of science to including it within its (science) realm. The burden then would be not of showing that it is scientific, but of showing that there really *is* such experience.

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1. 'Anubhava sampradāyopadeśa pariśīlanena .. ..'
—Parātriṁśikā-Vivaraṇa P. 161.

2. Āgmana and Nigamana are complementary.

It is not that the Śruti (Veda or Nigama) tradition does not accept the revealed truth as also being experienced, nor is it that the Āgama does not take the experienced truth as also revealed. The Śruti is corroborated or confirmed by experience. The Gītā says, 'the truth and falsity both are 'seen' (or experienced) by the seers of truth'.[1] Similarly, the Āgamic truth is also believed to have been revealed by Śiva. In fact, all the Āgamas (texts) begin with a question from Goddess Pārvatī, Śiva's divine consort, and Lord Śiva's answer which forms the entire body of the text. So, both Nigama and Āgama are both revelation and experience; but still the Nigama is mainly revelation, and Āgama is mainly experience. The dialogue of Śiva and Pārvatī may be construed to be a literary device of presenting the experiential truth. In this respect too the Āgama complemets the Veda, the revelation being corroborated by experience.

3. Āgama is not speculation.

The Āgama thus provides experiential basis for philosophy. If philosophy originates purely from the imagination and speculation of the philosopher, it hangs in the air, and it can never become a 'praxis'. The Logical Positivist and some of the other contemporary philosophers are justified in pointing out that purely speculative philosophy has no meaning. The Āgamist (Tantrist) would fully agree with the Positivist, but he (the Āgamist) would move a step further and add that empirical is not the only realm of experience; there is an extra-empirical experience too, which includes Reality within its sphere. This higher yogic experience, he would say, is not a mere theoritical possibility, nor is it the privilege of the Āgamic seer only. It can be had by all; and, in fact, in all ages the yogis, saints and sages have succeeded in having it. It can be 'verified', if verfication is not (and it need not be) confined to the empirical.

There may be misgivings about and objections against the extra-empirical yogic experience and its verifiability; we will

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1. उभयोरपि दृष्टोऽन्तस्त्वनयोः तत्त्वदर्शिभिः ।
'ubhayorapi dṛṣṭontastvanayoḥ tattvadarśibhiḥ'

Gītā 2/16

discuss them elsewhere.

4. The claim of truth-value.

Here, it should suffice to say that to confine our understanding to the empirical and deny the very possibility of an extra-empirical yogic experience is unwise, unscientific and egoistic. If there is a tradition which claims that the divine nature of man can be experienced here and now, and that there are definite ways and means to achieve it; and if there have been persons who have succeded in doing so, then it becomes obligatory on the part of philosophy to investigate into the claims of such tradition. To turn our face back saying that this is all mere faith and has only emotive value, is unphilosophical and also unscientific. If we accept this, then the Āgamic (Tantric) tradition deserves closer study.

The Tantra claims verifiability. It says, "Direct perception is the proof accepted by all beings. Those who reason adversely, are defeated by the strength of its cognition. What is not seen is doubtful; who knows what will happen about the unseen ? The best philosophy is that which gives direct results".[1] And, therefore, "the Kaulic (or Tantric) philosophy stands proved because it gives dircet results".[2] Since it is based on experience, it is called Ātma-vijñāna (the *science* of the Self).

10. PRATYABHIJÑĀ IS THE CENTRAL PROBLEM.

The central problem of the Tantra as interpreted by Kāśmīra Śaivism is the pratyabhijñā (recognition) of the self. This is

1. प्रत्यक्षञ्च प्रमाणाय सर्वेषांप्राणिनां प्रिये
उपलब्धिबलात्तस्य हताः सर्वे कुतार्किका : ॥
परोक्षं कोऽनुजानीते कस्य किं वा भविष्यति ।
यद्वा प्रत्यक्षफलदं तदेवोत्तमदर्शनम् ॥
Pratyakṣañca pramāṇāya sarveṣāṁ prāṇināṁ priye.
upalabdhibalāttasya hatāḥ sarve kutārkikāḥ.
parokṣaṁ konujānīte kasya kiṁ vā bhavisyati.
yadvā pratyakṣaphaladaṁ tadevottamadarśanam.
—Kulārṇava Tantra 2/88-89

2. कुलं प्रमाणतां याति प्रत्यक्षफलदं यतः ।
Kulaṁ pramāṇatāṁ yāti pratyakṣaphaladaṁ yataḥ
—Ibid. 2/87

the beginning and also the end. The foremost problem is : who am I ? Am I nothing more than the psychophysical organism bound by its limitations; or am I an independent being, free from the limitations of the body and its environments, the fact of my captivation into the bodily environments being accidental ? Is freedom my real nature, and if so, how to realise it ?

Even in my limited state of existence I feel that I am partially free, and in all my attempts I am labouring directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously, to free myself fully in my present predicament. Unfulfilled wants, disease, pain, and so on, are constant limitations on my part, but I am always trying to accomplish my desires, to fulfill my wants, and to have mastery over my environment. In other words, I am always trying to get over my limitations and become free. This natural endeavour of mine suggests that my real nature might be perfect freedom towards which I am always unconsciously pushing.[1]

Although the Tantras give in detail the process of creation, the real problem for the paśu (the limited self) is not to know how the world is created, but to know what his real nature is. Of course, in a way it is necessary to know the origin and nature of the world, because I am related to it, and I cannot know myself without knowing the world. That is why the process of creation is discussed. But the question is not to know the world for its own sake, but to know it in order to know the self. So again the main problem is that of knowing the self.[2]

The Tantra declares that the real nature of the self is Śiva which is Śuddha Śamvit (Consciousness), the state of freedom and perfection. I am really Śiva, but I find myself in the predi-

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1. According to the Reminiscence theory of Plato, the soul has come from the perfect world of Ideas, the reminiscence or memory of which it unconsciously preserves; and so also it tries to apperehend back its real home.

2. The same is true about the Upaniṣads also. There too the emphasis is on knowing the self and not on the process of creation. Abhinavagupta has caught this purport of the Āgamas and has well emphasised this point throughout in his writings.

cament of the poor limited paśu. As I am not aware of my real nature, I do not recognise myself as Śiva. The moment I have the recognition, I am free. But is it so simple ? Is the ignorance of my self responsible for such colossal misfortune ? And is the self-knowledge such a miraculous thing that it turns the whole picture upside down ? The answer is—yes. So let us now see what the nature of this self-knowledge (Ātma-pratyabhijñā) is and how it works an outright transformation.

11. THE MEANING OF THE TERM PRATYABHIJÑĀ

The word pratyabhijñā or pratyabhijñāna or abhijñā is usually translated into English as recognition. But the word recognition expresses the meaning only partially. I saw some person yesterday, I see him again today and 'recognise' him to be the same person. That is, I see the person today and also know that it is the same person whom I saw yesterday. This is what is meant by the English word "recognition." What is important here is the "re"—cognising of the thing. But what is meant by the word pratyabhijñā as technically used in Kāśmīra Śaivism is slightly different. [1] In pratyabhijñā it is not important whether I saw the person before or not, I might have seen him a hundred times or I may be seeing him the first time; but the important thing is that I did not know his identity before, and now I come to know that he is Mr. so and so. Knowledge of identity is the characteristic of pratyabhijñā[2].

Two favourite examples of pratyabhijñā given by Abhinavagupta will help in understanding the position. Suppose the king of my country does not know me; some other pandit who belongs to the darbar of the king, takes me to the king and introduces me to him telling him that I am Mr. so and so with such and such qualifications and so on. I am now not a stranger to the king, he knows my full identity. This is a case of pratyabhijñā. Another example is that of a lady with a love-laden heart. The man to whom she is going to be married and for whom she has devel-

1. For want of a better English word we will still use the word recognition for pratyabhijñā.
2. I. P. V– pp 20–21

oped the feeling of love even without being acquainted with him, is there before her. She is seeing him, but to her the man is no better than any other man, because she does not know that this is the same man whom her parents have chosen for her and whom she loves so dearly. But suppose an elderly person who knows the man well comes and discloses to her the identity of the man in question, the lady comes to know with pleasant surprise that this is no ordinary man but her beloved would-be-husband. In other words, she now has the pratyabhijñā of the man. The moment she knows his identity, he becomes the source of tremendous joy to her[1].

Similarly, the self is already given in experience. I am aware of my self. I 'see' myself. But unfortunately I take myself to be nothing more than the limited individual which is technically called paśu. But this is not my real identity. My real identity is Śiva, the infinite. The *Guru* or the scripture (Āgama) discloses to me my real identity and then I know that I am Śiva. To be aware of the real identity of the self (which is Śiva) is to have pratyabhijñā of (or recognise) the self. To use the terms of Advaita Vedānta, the "that" is already given to us; but we mistake the "what" (identity) of it. In the case of a rope-snake the "that" (the thing which is there before me) is already given in my experience, but I do not know that it is rope; I take it to be snake. That is to say, I do not really know "what" it is. But when I come to know that it is rope, then it means that I have recognised the 'that'.

From the above analysis of the meaning of pratyabhijñā two things become clear. First, the thing recognised (pratya-

1. The same point is illustrated in the famous story of Nala and Damayanti also (an example that finds favour with the pratyabhijñā philosophers). Nala was standing before Damayanti, she could not recognise him as Nala, as he was in disguise, and was still aggrieved of the parting of Nala. But later on she came to know that the man standing before her was Nala himself; in other words, she came to have pratyabhijñā of Nala, which she did not have before, and subsequently her sorrow was gone.

bhijñāpita) is not a new thing; that is, it is not created afresh; it is already there. In this sense it is already acquired (prāpta). Hence the paradox that pratyabhijñā is the getting of the got. Secondly, it is a new event, although the thing recognised has already been there. The Self (or Śiva) was already there, but I did not know the same before, it was coveredto my sight, and it is only now that the veil is removed and I become aware of the real identity. So pratyabhijñā is something new in the history of myself, the paśu. This position clarifies the meaning of the above paradox.

12. THE BAUDDHA AND PAURUṢA JÑĀNA

Now one may ask here : is it merely by knowing that my real identity is Śiva, that I attain Śivahood ? By learning the scriptures or hearing the guru I have come to know that I am Śiva; but this knowledge does not give me Śiva-realization, I still remain the same bound paśu. To ask in simple words, does pratyabhijñā mean the verbal or intellectual knowledge of my identity (Śiva), and if so, does this knowledge bring freedom ? In answer to this we must refer to two types of ignorance and subsequently two types of knowledge (illumination), mentioned by Abhinavagupta. The one is called "Bauddha" (Bauddha-ajñāna and Bauddha-jñāna) and the other is called "Pauruṣa" (Pauruṣa ajñāna and Pauruṣa-jñāna). 'Bauddha ajñāna' means the intellectual ignorance which can be removed by the intellectual knowledge (Bauddha jñāna) acquired from the scripture. 'Pauruṣa-ajñāna' means the ignorance which has gripped the entire person.[1] It is of the nature of spiritual dirt (*mala*)[2] or bondage. This can be removed not by mere intellectual knowledge (*bauddha-jñāna*)[3] but by the practical initiation (dīkṣā) into the path of spiritual sādhanā and following the path

1. There is no perfect substitute in English for the '*pauruṣa*' ajñāna. '*Pauruṣa*' means pertaining to *puruṣa* (person). Hence *pauruṣa* ajñāna means the ignorance which pertains to the entire person (and not merely the inellect).
2. मलमज्ञानमिच्छन्ति संसाराङ्कुरकारणम् । T. A. 1/23
3. न हि बौद्धाज्ञानमात्र निवृत्तौ मोक्षो भवेत् । T. A. (*Viveka*), 1/24

sincerely[1]. When the scripture declares that Mokṣa (Liberation or Freedom) can be attained by knowledge, we should construe knowledge as the pauruṣa knowledge and not as *bauddha* knowledge.[2] *Bauddha* knowledge can give Mukti only when the *pauruṣa* ignorance is removed; it cannot do so independently.[3] But the *pauruṣa* knowledge independently and unconditionally causes Mokṣa.[4]

We should not also think that the *bauddha jñāna* is irrelevant and unnecessary. On the contrary, it is quite helpful and even necessary. It is the pre-requisite of the advance in spiritual sādhanā. The *buddhi* (intellect or understanding) of the *sādhaka* must be clear. The *sādhaka* should understand the philosophic position, and his mind should be free from doubts. He should know even verbally that his real nature is Śiva, so that he may be induced to follow the practical path in order to realise the same. The *Bauddha jñāna,* therefore, is undoubtedly helpful. Hence the importance of the Śāstras (scriptures) which import *bauddha jñāna,* connot be ignored. It is also true that one can fully understand the meaning of the Śāstras and have clear intellectual understanding only when one's *pauruṣa* ajñāna is, to some extent, removed. That is to say, if one is fully engrossed in the *pauruṣa-ajñāna,* one cannot even have the clear *bauddha-jñāna.* The two knowledges, therefore, are mutually helpful. It would be unfair to draw a sharp line between the two, as they are generally found to be intermixed. When we say that *pratyabhijñā* is not *bauddha-jñāna,* what we mean is that *pratyabhijñā* is not *mere* bauddha jñāna, the pauruṣa-jñāna must also be there. And what is more important is the pauruṣa-jñāna.

Pratyabhijñā, therefore, is not the mere verbal or intellectual knowledge of Śiva, but it is the actual uncovering of the Self preceded by the removal of the *mala* (specially the *Āṇava mala* which is responsible for the individuation or limitation of the Self). And thus we can say *that pratyabhijñā is the total spiritual transformation of the person.*

1. Ibid. 1/24
2. Ibid. 1/24 (Avataraṇikā).
3. Ibid. 1/24 (Avataraṇikā).
4. Ibid. 1/24

A question arises here : if *Pratyabhijñā* is said to be transformation of personality, is this meant in the sense of literal transformation such as in the case of milk changing into curd ? The answer is that the transformation is not meant literally as in the case of milk, but it is really purification, and this too is not of the Consciousness *in itself*, for the Consciousness (or *Citi*) *in itself* is eternally pure. In spiritual transformation the Self or Consciousness does not change, nor is anything added to it; rather there is a removal of *mala* or *ajñāna* (ignorance). And this amounts to spiritual change in the person. After having *pratyabhijñā* I do not remain the same that I am now, but I become a different person so to say. In this sense purification itself can be called change or transformation. When the dirty cloth becomes pure by being washed, it is not transformed, nor anything is added to it; there is simply the negative function of the dirt being removed. This is quite true, but even then can we say that the cloth remains the same ? Does it not change from the impure state to the state of purity ? Is the washing of the cloth a purely negative function ? Is it not positive in the sense that the cloth attains its pure real nature ? Similarly, in spiritual transformation the self attains its real nature which is already pure and perfect.

We have seen above that *Pratyabhijñā* is not verbal knowledge; it is an actual experience. We do not simply 'know' (in the verbal sense) the Self, but we actually experience it. To use the terms of Russell, it is not the knowledge by description, but knowledge by acquaintance. It is the direct awareness or cognition of the self. It can also be called illumination (*bodha*).

This point is stressed in the Upaniṣads also. There we find that *Śravaṇa* (the verbal communication that I am Brahman) is not enough; *Manana* and *Nididhyāsana* must follow in order that *Brahma - jñāna* (knowledge of Brahman) dawns. *Brahma - jñāna* is not the mere verbal knowledge but an actual experience (*anubhava* or *anubhūti*). *Śruti* (or *Śravaṇa*) followed by *Mati* (or *manana*) etc. leads to the actual *anubhūti* (experience) of Brahman. That is why it is said that when one knows Brahman, one becomes Brahman itself (*brahma veda brahmaiva bhavati*).

By the way, we may point out here that the significance of the *pauruṣa - jñāna* emphasized in Kāśmīra Śaivism, is twofold. On

the one hand, by emphasizing that *ātma - jñāna* is the actual removal of *mala*, it corrects the common misunderstanding that ātmajñāna is just verbal or intellectual knowledge; and on the other hand, it emphasizes that ātmajñāna is not a physical change but a change in consciousness—an actual removal of ignorance; and so it is basically awareness or knowledge (*jñāna*).

13. WHY PRATYABHIJÑĀ IS CALLED KNOWLEDGE.

A question may be asked here : if Pratyabhijñā virtually means removal of *mala* or spiritual transformation, why is it called *bodha* or jñāna (knowledge) ? In answer we may point out that the mala is not like the physical dirt; it is in fact of the nature of ajñāna (ignorance) which can be removed only by jñāna. Our point would become clear by certain examples. Take the example of a dream or illusion. When in a dream I 'see' my hands and feet tied by thieves and I am subjected to torture, then is this whole misfortune not because there is something wrong in my mind ? in other words, I am gripped by some kind of ignorance. When one becomes insane and forgets even one's identity, then this is, philosophically speaking, a case of ignorance. And this ignorance is such that it effects a practical change in the person; that is why it is called '*pauruṣa*' ignorance. When one wakes up after the dream or one is cured of one's insanity, then this is a case of jñāna (knowledge) And again this knowledge is such that it effects a practical change in the person in the opposite direction. That is why it is called *pauruṣa* knowledge.

Pratyabhijñā is called *jñāna* (knowledge) because it is an awakening, an enlightenment or the rising in a higher level of awareness or consciousness. *Jñāna* does not mean only the objective knowledge in the form of 'this' or 'that'. It may mean any kind of illumination. The translation of *jñāna* into the English word 'knowledge' is liable to create some confusion, as the word knowledge is generally used in the sense of objective knowledge Jñāna, of course, includes the objective knowledge, but it is not confined to that. The simple awareness, for example, that 'I am' and not that 'I am this' or 'I am that' can also be called *jñāna*. The highest jñāna, according to Tantra, would be the awareness that I am one and all. This is called the perfect 'I' (*Pūrṇāhantā*).

If we understand the concept of *Pratyabhijñā* in the light of the idealistic metaphysics of Kāśmīra Śaivism, it will be still more clear that *Pratyabhijñā* is jñāna. Kāśmīra Śaivism is an idealistic system and here there is no physical or material reality; all reality is epistemic or ideal. There is, therefore, no physical or material transformation; all transformation is epistemic or mental (to use the word 'mental' in the western sense); just as the change from dream state of mind to the waking state is an epistemic change. In the *Paśu* state I have forgotten myself, just *as* I forget myself in a dream. Ignorance is a kind of primordial forgetfulness of my real nature, and pratyabhijñā, therefore, is a kind of remembrance of the same. Ignorance can cause transformation of personality, and so can knowledge too. This can be seen in the case of a dream. In the dream state I become a different person so to say, and when I wake up, my previous existence is restored.

One may ask: is *pratyabhijñā* a knowledge qualitatively different from the ordinary knowledge ? *Pratyabhijñā* is certainly different from the ordinary knowledge, but it is doubtful whether it would be appropriate to call it *qualitatively* different. If by qualitative difference what is meant is the transformation from one state of consciousness to another just as the waking state is different from the dream, then there is no harm in calling it qualitatively different. But if we mean by it a mode of knowledge which is completely unknown to us, then it is not so. *Pratyabhijñā* is the immediate knowledge of the Self. We ordinarily have the immediate knowledge of ourselves, and *pratyabhijñā* differs from it not in the mode, nor in the 'thatness' of the content, but it differs only in the 'whatness' of the content. In *pratyabhijñā* I know myself as the all-pervasive perfect Self (*Pūrṇāham* or Śiva). Of course, it differs in mode from the objective knowledge like the knowledge of the *nīla* (blue) and the *pīta* (yellow). (*Nīla* and *pīta* are the classical examples of objects like the chair and the table or the pitcher and the cloth). The *nīla* and the *pīta* or the chair and the table are known as objects in the subject-object duality, whereas the self is known in a self-illumined way (*svayamprakāśa*). So far as the mode is concerned, pratyabhijñā, although different from the objective knowledge, is not different from the ordinary knowledge of the self. It differs only in the 'what' of the content. In

the ordinary knowledge of the self the 'what' of the content (self) is *paśutva* or *aṇutva* (the state of person as limited self), whereas in *Pratyabhijñā* the 'what' is *Śivatva* (the state of person as Śiva or Infinite).

There is a vital question to be considered here. The question is what is ignorance ? In other words, what is that by virtue of which one becomes ignorant, and subsequently what is that which constitutes jñ*āna* (knowledge) ? To regard myself as different from what I really am, is ignorance. I am really one with all; but I regard them other to me; this is ignorance. Ignorance essentially consists of the distinction of the self from the rest of the world. This duality is possible only when I confine myself to a particular limited individuality or ego (*aṇu*). I am unmindful of my all-embracing and, therefore, infinite or perfect nature, and take myself to be a limited finite being, different from others. This is imperfect understanding of myself. And ignorance is just this imperfect understanding of myself (*apūrṇakhyāti*).

If ignorance is to cut oneself from the rest of the whole, then jñāna (knowledge) would be to embrace all within oneself, to regard oneself as one with all (*sarvātmā*). When I become one with all, then I realise my infinite or perfect nature. This is the perfect understanding of myself or knowledge which is contradistinguished from the imperfect understanding of myself or ignorance.

One may again ask here: how to understand my oneness with the all ? I am physically different from others, how can this hard truth be obliterated ? And if there is a state of consciousness where this unity is achieved, can it be shown to be there in actual experience ? The answer is : this unity is quite apprehensible even by our common understanding· We can apprehend this unity in the experience of love. In love the duality vanishes, I become one with the person whom I love. And the deeper I enter into love, the more I realise this unity. Experience of love is the knowledge of unity. Of course, our common experience of love is imperfect; normally we do not achieve it in its completeness. But it can be logically stretched to its fullness; it is conceivable that there could be a perfect and complete state of

love where the duality has completely vanished. This could be the state of *pratyabhijñā*. Religiously speaking, ignorance is nothing but selfishness or egoism, and jñ*āna* is selflesssness or love. *Pratyabhijñā* is nothing but the perfect all inclusive love. The Upaniṣads also speak of this unity with all.

14. THE MODE AND CONTENT OF PRATYABHIJÑĀ.

We have already seen that pratyabhijñā is a kind of *knowledge*. Now let us see what is the mode or form of this knowledge and also see what is its content or matter. The mode of this knowledge is immediate or intuitive. We do not know here through some medium; we know directly or immediately. Moreover, the most remarkable thing is that here the knower and the known are one. The unity of the knower and the known is possible only in the case of the self. I know myself. But again I do not know myself in the subject-object mode of knowing as the Nyāya maintains. Here the position of Kāśmīra Śaivism is completely one with the Advaita Vedānta.[1] The self is not the object of my knowing, as the table and the chair is; but I know myself in a self-illumined (*svayamprakāśa*) way. The analogy of light is quite appropriate. The light illumines the objects and also illumines itself. But the mode of illumining itself is different from the mode of illumining the object, say, the table. The light *falls* on the table and thus illumines it in the objective mode—the light is the subject and the table the object. But in order to illumine itself the light does not fall back upon itself; that is, it does not make itself its object, but it is self-illumined. One need not bring another light to see that light. Similarly, the self does not make itself its object, but the self is self-illumined (*svayamprakāśa*)

Now, what is the content of the pratyabhijñā knowledge ? Obviously the content is the self itself. Pratyabhijñā is a case of self-knowledge or self-realisation (*ātma-pratyabhijñā*). Thus it is the immeditate or intuitive experience of the self. But there is a question here. I do already have the immediate or intuitive

1. This issue is thoroughly discussed in the Advaita Vedānta system; in the Tantric tradition, however, it is simply referred.

experience of myself, and there is nothing extra-ordinary about it. So, how does the pratyabhijñā differ from the ordinary experience of the self ? The answer is : In respect of the mode of knowing, pratyabhijñā does not differ from the ordinary experience of the self. It does not also differ so far as the 'thatness' of the content is concerned, for I 'see' the same self. The difference is regarding the reality of the content. In pratyabhijñā we experience the self at a deeper level, so to say, where everything is included within the Self (and therefore, self with capital 'S'). The ordinary experience is that of the lower self or the surface self or the false self which is called *paśu* But *pratyabhijñā* is experience of the Higher Self or the Deeper Self or the Real Self which is called Śiva. The deeper we enter into the Self the more we realise the external world as the reflection of the Self, and there is a point where the entire multiplicity becomes one with Self. This is the state of the Self in perfect unity with all (*pūrṇāhantā*). It is the state of perfect freedom and bliss. We may call it mystic in the sense of being elusive to sense-experience and discursive thought. But it is not mystic in the sense of being occult, for it is perfecty natural with the only difference that it is the experience of the higher or deeper nature.

15. PRATYABHIJÑĀ IS THE DISSOLUTION OF THE EGO.

We have seen that pratyabhijñā is the knowledge or realisation of the Cosmic 'I' or Śivahood. It follows then that pratyabhijñā is virtually the dissolution of the ego. This obvious truth needs to be emphasized here for the reason that there are some persons who try to fill the all-pervasive Śiva into the ego. They practise the 'Śivoham' sādhanā which means meditating that 'I am Śiva'. This Sādhanā is really meant for dissolving the ego and merging into the higher Self (Śiva). But in their case it becomes the opposite. They mistake the ego itself to be the Śiva, and the puffed up ego takes the place of Śiva. Such people are thus doubly ignorant.

What is meant by ego ? Ego is the consciousness of the individual 'I' as different from others. It confines oneself to a particular body, mind, etc. and is thus the principle of differentiation and limitation. It can be easily noticed that ego

stands as an obstruction in the way of Śiva-realisation. In fact, ego is the greatest obstruction. Śiva is the all pervasive Self which is in perfect unity with all. And ego is just the opposite. It keeps one confined to a particular individuality. So long as the ego persists, one cannot realise one's Śivahood. It is only when one breaks out of the ego-shell, one becomes one with the all-pervasive Self. The wave cannot become one with the ocean unless it surrenders its individuality. Therefore, to preserve ego and have Śivahood is a contradiction in terms. One cannot feel unity with all till one is captivated in a particular individuality.

The dissolution of ego should not be understood as annihilation of the self or the existential suicide. Egolessness does not mean the disappearance of the self; it only means the disappearance of the limited form of individuality which the self has adopted. When the wave surrenders its individuality, what is lost is not water but the particular form and name which the water had adopted. In fact, the wave becomes the ocean. Rather, the wave was already one with the ocean, its wavehood was accidental; and now as the accident has gone, the wave attains its real nature which is ocean. Similarly, the paśu shakes off its limited finite form and becomes the infinite Śiva. It would be more correct to say that the self is already Śiva, its paśuhood being an adopted covering which is now gone, and the self now shines in its pristine purity of Śivahood. Therefore, there is no question of committing suicide. What appears as self-immolation is really self-enrichment.

If pratyabhijñā is viewed as the dissolution of the ego, it will have no virtual difference from the theistic conception of self-surrender. In the theistic conception of Bhakti the jīva is required to surrender himself to God. But what is more significant as sādhanā is not God but the surrender itself. And there can be surrender even without conceiving a God to whom to surrender. In that case it would be just silencing or extinction (*nirvāṇa*) of the ego. In Buddhism we find self-surrender or self-renunciation without God. This can be called the surrender of the jñāna-mārga (the path of knowledge).

The pratyabhijñā system does recognise as genuinely beneficial the self-surrender of the Bhakti-mārga (path of devotion). Other sādhanās also are accepted as they indirectly tend towards thinning of the ego. In fact, the success of every sādhanā depends upon the amount of the effacement of the ego it directly or indiretly works.

It may be objected here that if there is no ego, then there is no person or self. How can there be egoless personality or egoless self? That the egoless self or egoless personality is possible has been discussed earlier. It may here suffice to say that the ego is not a necessary characteristic of the self. Ego is a relative condition which may or may not be present in the self. When the self is absolute and embraces all in its bosom, there is no question of ego there, for ego is only the limiting and differentiating factor. Ego comes at the limited state of the Self called *paśu* or *aṇu*.

16. ŚIVA-PAŚU UNITY AS THE METAPHYSICAL GROUND OF PRATYABHIJÑĀ.

It is logically appropriate, even logically necessary, that the concept of pratyabhijñā must have as its metaphysical ground the concept of the unity of the *paśu* and the Śiva. The Tantra emphasises again and again that the *paśu* is nothing but Śiva, that it is Śiva who has adopted the form of paśu (gṛhitapaśubhāvaḥ). The logic behind this emphasis is that if the *paśu* is not already Śiva, it can never become Śiva. One cannot be 'made' Śiva. The wave can completely become one with the ocean as it is nothing but water. But a different object, say a ship made of iron and wood, may go into the fathomless depth of the ocean, and yet it will not become one with it, simply because it is made of a different material, it is not water. Similarly, the self or the paśu becomes completely one with Śiva because substantially it is nothing but Śiva Himself (or Consciousness). The difference of *paśu* from *Śiva* is only regarding the particular individuality it has taken, just as the wave is different from the ocean only in the sense that the water in the wave has taken a particular limited form The moment the particular limited form is dissolved, the wave (which is no longer the wave now) is completely one with the ocean. And so is the case with the *paśu*. The

same logic is found in the Upaniṣads when the Mahāvākyas declare that the jīva is Brahman.

The pratyabhijñā philosophers go even one step further in this regard. They say that the paśu is not only substantially one with Śiva, but it also, even in its paśu form, performs the same activities, on a smaller and limited scale, which Śiva Himself performs. They mean to say that *paśu* is the *mini-Śiva.* Śiva performs the five cosmic actions (pañcakṛtyas) of creation etc. The limited Śiva or paśu performs all the *pañcakṛtyas* with regard to his own world. The paśu creates his own imaginary world in the dream etc., sustains it for some time, and finally destroys it while waking up. He covers himself by assuming some new form (such as in acting in a drama) and thereby apparently becoming something other than himself; and then he also uncovers himself and comes back to himself.

The logic behind all this is that if the paśu is one with Śiva, he (the paśu) must enjoy, at least on a limited scale, the freedom which the Śiva enjoys. The Tantra emphasises the freedom of the paśu (limited of course) simply to show his divine heritage. The paśu enacts or imitates the actions of Śiva and does exercise his freedom whenever possible. The free activities of the otherwise bound paśu remind us of his real nature which is Śivahood or Freedom. He is just like a caged lion even though caged– declaring its freedom and might by roaring within the cage and trying to break out of the bars of the cage.

17 THE RELEVANCE OF BHAKTI

A question may be asked : if the *paśu* or *jīva* is one with Śiva or God, is it possible to talk meaningfully of Bhakti which presupposes difference or duality between the Bhakta (devotee) and the Bhagavāna (God) ? The answer is : Yes. So long as the paśu is paśu (that is, the individualised consciousness—aṇu), it is different from the cosmic consciousness, Śiva. When Śiva has become the paśu, it is not that the Śiva is lost. Śiva remains Śiva and also becomes the paśu so to say. When the paśu is there, Śiva also is there in his own right, the paśu being like the wave and the Śiva like the ocean. It is perfectly meaningful to talk of Bhakti, for the paśu is different from the Śiva, just as the

wave is different from the ocean, although in a sense it is perfectly one with the ocean. This position is clearly envisaged by Utpaladeva in his 'Śivastotrāvalī'.

This position is appreciated also by the Advaitin who is the champion advocate of Brahma-jīva unity. There is a lot of wisdom in the famous verse which is ascribed to Śaṅkara; which says, 'though the difference between you and me does not exist at all, yet it is true that I am yours and not that you are mine; just as the wave belongs to the ocean and not that the ocean belongs to the wave.[1]

It should be noted that if Bhakti presupposes difference, it presupposes unity also. There can be no Bhakti without unity; there can be no love and no relation of Bhakti between two substantially different persons. If I am totally different from my Father (that is, if God is not my father or so), I can have no love or devotion for Him. In fact, what is required in Bhakti or love is a *real* unity and an apparent difference between the *bhakta* and *Bhagavāna*, which is possible in the absolutist's position. The object of my love or my devotion must really be one with me and yet somehow different from me. The absolutist's analogy of the wave and the ocean or the spark (*sphuliṅga*) and the fire is quite befitting, for the wave or the spark is one with the ocean or the fire, and different as well.

It should also be made clear that even this difference (as cited above) persists so long as the *paśu* (*bhakta*) does not attain Self-realisation by shaking off his individuality. In the final stage he must be able to say, "I and my father are one". The culmination of Bhakti is the merger of the bhakta in the Bhagavāna.

What follows as the gist of the entire discussion of the above issue is that though I am Śiva or Śiva is my self, yet it is meaningful to say that I am the *lower* self and *Śiva* is the *higher* self, Śiva being the self of all selves (sarvātmā or viśvātmā), just as the ocean is to its waves. And the difference between the *Higher* self (Bhagavāna) and the *lower* self (bhakta) persists only

1. सत्यपि भेदापगमे नाथ तवाहं न मामकीनस्त्वम् ।
सामुद्रो हि तरंगः क्वचन समुद्रो न तारङ्गः ॥

so long as the *lower* self is the individualised soul (paśu). In the final stage the lower self must merge into the Higher self and become completely one with It, just as the wave by merging into the ocean becomes completely one with it.

18. DOES PRATYABHIJÑĀ ADMIT OF DEGREES ?

Does Pratyabhijñā admit of degrees ? In other words, is it meaningful to say that "A" has more pratyabhijñā and "B" has less of it ? It can safely be said that there is no question of degrees in pratyabhijñā just as perfection does not admit of degrees. It would be meaningless to talk of more perfect or less perfect; one is either perfect or imperfect. So, there is no 'less' or 'more' pratyabhijñā. Either one has recognised the self or one is ignorant.

All this is true, but still it is possible to conceive a hierarchy of sādhakas who are trying to reach the goal, just as there could be hierarchy of pilgrims---some could be far from the shrine, some near to it, some still nearer, and so on. The difference is based on how far one is able to break out of one's ego and identify oneself with others. The more I spread myself in others, the more I widen my identity and the more I realise myself. It is not a question of identifying myself with more persons or more things, but more deeply or intensely. Of course, the quantity also is included; there is nobody or nothing which is left out of myself. But the real question is how far have I penetrated the depth towards the completion or fullness of the unity.

In the spiritual progress, the Tantras mention a hierarchy of seven stages or grades of souls which are called *Sapta-pramātā* (seven knowers). They are Pralayākala, Sakala, Vijñānākala, Mantra, Mantreśvara, Mantra-maheśvara and Śiva. The progress from the stage of *Pralayākala* to that of Śiva may be termed as evolution[1] of the self from the narrower to the wider and fuller identity. The *Śiva-pramātā* is the highest stage, where the identity is achieved in its fullness.

The difference among the hierarchical stages of evolution of the soul can be understood in terms of purification of the self or removal of *mala* (spiritual dirt). The more the *mala* is removed

1. Evolution here is meant not in the Darwinian sense. It means spiritual evolution.

the brighter is the light of Consciousness which shines from within the self. Just as the brightness of the light of the sun or the moon is proportionate to the clarity of the sky, so also the brilliance of Consciousness is proportionate to the degree of self-purification. Thus the hierarchical stages of spiritual evolution of the soul are the stages in relation to the degree of freedom from *mala*.

So, though pratyabhijñā means the highest level of unity, yet it is implicitly present in all the lower stages, just as the goal is present in every step of the pilgrim; and the nearer the pilgrim reaches the shrine, the more he is thrilled by hearing more clearly the song of the tinkling bells of the shrine. It is not that one experiences the joy only when one reaches the highest stage; the nearer one draws to the Self, the more deeply one experiences the bliss of the Self.

19. PRATYABHIJÑĀ IS THE GROUND OF ALL THE UPĀYAS.

There is a connected question, namely: is pratyabhijñā a means or an end ? Sometimes *Pratyabhijñā* has been referred to as an *upāya* or means (pratyabhijñopāya). But if we consider the problem in view of the entire treatment of pratyabhijñā in the Tantric tradition, we will understand that it is said to be an *upāya* (means) just by courtesy. In fact, pratyabhijñā or *svarūpa-jñāna* (self-realisation) is the end of all the sādhanās; all the *upāyas* end in *pratyabhijñā*, which stands at the highest reach. Everything (that is, every sādhanā) is for pratyabhijñā; pratyabhijñā itself is not for any thing else; it is end in itself. It can be said to be an *upāya* only in the sense of being the ground of all the *upāyas*.

Pratyabhijñā, therefore, is not one of the upāyas, nor is it even the highest upāya, for it is not an upāya at all. But what does it mean to be the ground of all the *upāyas* ? It means that pratyabhijñā is implicitly present in all the *upāyas*. This further means that the success of every *upāya* depends upon its capacity to effect *pratyabhijñā* by dissolving the ego-sense. It should also be borne in mind that pratyabhijñā cannot be effected or brought about, as it is not the effect of a cause, it dawns or automatically comes of its own accord when the ground is cleared or the veil removed. The efficacy of a *sādhanā* is in clearing the ground or removing the covering. So, when we say that a *sādhanā* effects

pratyabhijñā, we simply mean that it lets pratyabhijñā shine by clearing the ground.

20. PRATYABHIJÑĀ AND APAROKṢĀNUBHŪTI

It would not be out of place to mention the comparative similarity between the pratyabhijñā of the Kāśmīra Śaivism and the *Aparokṣānubhūti* of the Advaita Vedānta. In the mode and also in the content the two are one. As the very name suggests, *aparokṣānubhūti* is the immediate or intuitive experience; and the content of the experience is the Self. So the *Aparokṣānubhūti* too is the immediate experience of the Self. I know Brahman as myself or I know myself as Brahman. I know Brahman by being Brahman (*Brahma veda brahmaiva bhavati*). In fact, I am already Brahman, though veiled by ignorance or *māyā*. And *aparokṣānubhūti* is just the uncovering of this veil and thereby realising that I am Brahman.

When the Upaniṣads declare, '*that thou art*' (*tattvamasi*) or '*I am Brahman*' (*ahaṁ brahmāsmi*) or '*this self is Brahman*' (*ayamātmā brahma*), then they are actually referring to pratyabhijñā. We are ignorant of our real indentity, and the Upaniṣads are just disclosing the same to us. The analogy of the '*Thou art the tenth*' (*Daśamastvamasi*) also means the same. The '*Daśamastvamasi*', however, also suggests the mode of knowing, which is immediate (*aparokṣa*) experience (*anubhūti*).

Pratyabhijñā is not different from *aparokṣānubhūti* in mode, nor is it different in the content. The difference between the two lies in the conception of the real nature of the self at the ultimate level[1]—the Self which is the content of this experience. According

1. In the systems of Indian philosophy we can find basic differrence in the nature of the Self and subsequently in the conception of *Mokṣa*. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika system regards the Self as devoid of knowledge, activity, pain and pleasure, etc., as these are accidental, qualities of the self, and so in the Mokṣa the self remains in itself devoid of all these things. In Sāṁkhya knowledge is accepted as the nature of the self, but there too activity, pain and pleasure are alienated as these belong to *prakṛti* and not to *Puruṣa*. In the Advaita

to Advaita Vedānta, the ultimate Self is inactive (*niṣkriya*), for all activity belongs to the lower principle, *Māyā*, which is false. The Self is also devoid of self-consciousness. But according to the Pratyabhijñā system, Śakti or dynamism is the very nature of the Self (*Śaktirūpa*). The Self is also self-conscious.

If pratyabhijñā and aparokṣānubhūti are virtually the same, does the usage of the word pratyabhijñā have some advantage over the word aparokṣānubhūti ? The word pratyabhijñā suggests the content of experience in question, the emphasis is one *what* I know. The word aparokṣānubhūti does not suggest any such content. But aparokṣānubhūti too has an advantage over the word pratyabhijñā, namely, that it suggests the mode of the experience in question; the mode or the way in which I know myself, is immediate (*aparokṣa*). The word pratyabhijñā gives no clue to the mode. So, while the word aparokṣānubhūti suggests the mode, the word pratyabhijñā suggests the content. And thus the two are mutually complementary.

There is another point of difference between the Pratyabhijñā system and the Advaita Vedānta in this context. The pratyabhijñā view emphasises what I really am, while the Advaita view emphasises what I am really not. The '*I am Brahman*' message of the Upaniṣads was, later on, in the Advaitin's analysis, converted into the position that I am not the body etc. The point is that unless I negate myself as the body, mind etc., I cannot reach Brahman, because the false identification with the not-self is obstruction or cover on Brahman; and it is, therefore, a question of uncovering or removing the obstruction. The pratyabhijñā view, on the other hand, emphasises that I am Śiva (or Brahman). The point is that unless I know myself as Brahman (or Śiva), I

Vedānta system knowledge or illumination (Cit) and bliss (*ānanda*) both are regarded as the very nature of the Self (Saccidānanda). We can say that in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika the self is only '*Sat*' (Existence), in Sāṁkhya it is '*Sat*' and '*Cit*' (knowledge or Consciousness), and in the Advaita Vedānta it is *Sat-Cit-Ānanda*. In the Tantric system, however, Kriyā or Spanda (spontaneity) is accepted in the nature of the Self in addition to *Sat-Cit*-Ānanda.

cannot dissociate myself from the body, etc. Thus we see that while the pratyabhijñā approach points to my real nature, the Advaitic view points to the extrinsic elements with which I have falsely or wrongly identified myself. In fact, the two approaches should go together. And so the two again are complementary to each other.

PART II

The Religious and Cultural Significance of the Tantric Tradition

1. POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE WORLD.

The philosophic position of a system has its bearing upon the religious side. The philosophic difference between the Advaitin and the Āgamist reflects itself in the difference regarding their religious and cultural attitude. Since according to the Advaitin the world is a veil or superimposition on Reality, the way to attain Reality would be, according to him, to tear off the covering which hides the Real. The world of duality which is an illusion, is an obstruction to the knowledge of Brahman, and, therefore, we must develop an attitude of vairāgya (detachment) towards the world and the worldly values. The world is ultimately unreal and valueless(tuccha), and finally it has to be rejected and got rid of. In the end the world has to be literally renounced (sannyāsa). Moreover, activity, according to the Advaitin, is incompatible with Jñāna, and, therefore, all activity would be a hindrance in the path of Self-realisation; and in the state of Mukti there is no possibility of activity at all. This totally negative attitude towards the world and life is the necessary outcome of the negative metaphysics which the Advaitin holds.

1. The Nigativistic religion ensues from the negativistic philosophy.

The Āgamist on the other side would give a contrary picture. Since the world is a līlā and positive outcome of Śiva, there is no question of renouncing the world. Moreover, kriyā is quite compatible with jñāna, and it is the very nature of the freed consciousness; therefore, there is no need of renouncing activity, nor would there be absence of activity in the life of the Jīvanmukta (the freed Soul who is still in body). As to the question of the world

2. The Rāga, and not the world itself, is bondage.

being a bondage to Mukti, the Āgamist would point out that it is not the world and worldly life that is bondage, but attachment (rāga) which is born out of ignorance (ajñāna or mala). Ajñāna is nothing but the sense of duality and egoity. It is not the world which is the outcome of ajñāna; it is only the sense of duality and egoity that is the outcome of ajñāna. It is not the world, therefore, that binds; what binds is the sense that 'I am a limited ego (aṇu or paśu)', and that 'the world is other to me or different from me.'

3. The Rāga can be overcome not by rejecting the world, but by the feeling of unity or love.

The attachment itself cannot vanish, the Āgamist would point out, simply by negating or rejecting the world; it would rather bind all the more The attachment can go only by overcoming the duality or difference, by realising that 'I am one with all'. The psychology of attachment requires the sense of duality and difference. I can be attached to something which I consider to be different from or other to me. There is no question of attachment with what is already myself or my own. This is why true love which is exemplified in the lives of saints, never causes attachment, but, n the contrary, frees one from attachment. It can be safely postulated as a theory that we can be free from attachment only by loving and not by simply turning away our attention from the world. The reason behind this is that the world cannot go nor can it loosen its grip simply by our derecognising or rejecting it. The world can lose its hold on us only when it is sublimated, that is, when it is taken to become our own self. This does not also mean that the physical world is changed; the world as such does not change; it is our attitude to the world in our mind that changes. The positive attitude towards the life and the world is actually a way—perphaps the wiser way—than the way of negation, of overcoming attachment.

The jīvanmukta in the Āgamic tradition behaves in the world in a positive way. He loves all as his own self, and enjoys the worldly objects in an unattached manner (like Śrī Kṛṣṇa). For him the world is the free manifestation or play of his own

Self. He is in perfect identity with all. The Advaitin, because he has a negative attitude towards the world, finds difficulty in adjusting the Jīvanmukta in the world.

In the Āgamic tradition we find a positive and respectful attiiude towards the world and the worldly values. The things of the world are accepted and worshipped as Śiva. Material wealth, for example, is taken to be the Goddess Lakṣmī, a form of the divine Śakti. The natural desires and vṛttis of mind are accepted as sparks of the divine Śakti. The Sāttvic, Rājasic and Tāmasic vṛttis are respectively symbolised and worshipped as Goddesses Sarasvatī, Lakṣmī and Kālī. A girl or a woman would be regarded as the Devī (Goddess) Herself.

4. The attitude of holiness towards the worldly values.

This is diametrically opposed to the negativist's attitude towards the woman, which says, 'What is the door to hell ? It is the woman'.[1] To regard the woman as the door to hell, as the verse suggests, is the height of the vanity and hypocrisy of man ; psycho-analytically speaking it is a psychological situation of self-deception. By condemning the woman man actually condemns his own self—the sexual self.

Te have a respectful or religious atttitude towards the things and the beings of the world (Śiva-bhāvanā) is a spiritual sādhanā. By so doing we actually sublimate our own mind. To have worshipful attitude towards the things of the world does not drive us into indulgence; on the contrary, it helps us make the mind free from the compulsion to indulge. It is not also incompatible with the attempt to correct or reform. One can adore a girl as Devī or a boy as Kṛṣṇa, and at the same time admonish him or her to discipline. Almost in every spiritual tradition the disciple is required to worship his guru as God, but is at the same time advised to be aware of the infirmities of the guru as well. It is said, 'one should

5. The attitude of holiness does not drive into indulgence.

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1. 'द्वारं किमेतन्नरकस्य नारी ।'

'dvāraṁ kimetannarakasya nārī.'

This verse occurs in a spiritual questionair (ādhyātmika praśnottarī) ascribed to Saṁkarācārya himself.

speak of the infirmities of the guru also' (doṣā vācyā gurorapi).[1].

Unlike the Advaitic religion which prescribes the path of renunciation (sannyāsa), the Āgamic religion consistently favours the path of the householder (gṛhastha). The life of the householder provides ample opportunity for translating into practice the Āgamic ideals. It is quite helpful in integrating the personality fully, and thereby realising the Self in its fullness. It is favoured not only because it is easier, but it is considered even necessary. The renunciate life may not bring spiritual integration; it may on the contrary give rise to disintegration by suppression of desires. It is true that renunciants like Buddha, Śaṁkara, Raman Maharsi, etc. have been truly integrated personalities; but they were so because they felt immense love and compassion for their fellow - beings, and were all the time doing good to others, in which case they were actually following the Āgamic ideal. Such persons free themselves from the narrow confines of family only to serve a larger family. The whole world becomes family (vasudhaiva kuṭumbakam).

6. The path of the householder is favoured.

The Āgamic attitude of adoration has not been a mere theory; it has been a living culture in India. When a girl is born, it is said that the Devī or Bhagavatī has come in the house. The names of women in India are generally suffixed or surnamed by 'Devi'. The virgin-worship (kumārīpūjana) is still prevalent in the Hindu society, and it is specially performed in the novena of Navarātra. The bridegroom and the bride in a marriage ceremony are worshipped as Viṣṇu and Lakṣmī, and the person who performs the ritual of Kanyādāna (giving of

7. The attitude of holiness a living culture.

1. There is a well-known story about the famous medieaval Yogi-saint, Gorakhanātha who adored his guru, Matsyendranātha (or Machandara-nātha) like anything, that he (Gorakhanātha) once saved his guru who had fallen in love with a a beautiful Tantrist queen of Kāmākhyā (Assam). The story goes that Gorakhanātha, in the guise of a musician, went to the court of the queen where his guru, Machandara was present, and sang, 'wake up, Machandara, Gorakha has come.' (jāga Machandara Gorakha āyā.).

the bride), utters the mantra, 'I give the bride as Lakṣmī to the bridegroom as Viṣṇu'[1]. Even material objects are worshipped—the earth, the mountains, the rivers, the ocean, the trees, the fire, the sun, the moon, and so on and so forth. To worship God in man (nara-nārāyaṇa), to see 'Nārāyaṇa' in the poor (daridranārāyaṇa), to find 'Hari' in the untouchable (harijan), to visualise 'Janārdana' in the rank and file (janatājanārdana)—is nothing but Āgamic.

2. BHUKTI AND MUKTI ARE NOT DICHOTOMOUS

From what we have discussed above it should become clear that there is really no contradiction between the way of the world (Bhukti or Bhoga) and the way to Liberation (Mukti or Mokṣa).

1. The socalled dichotomy.

The ascetic tradition maintains that there is dichotomy between Bhukti and Mukti, or Bhoga and Yoga, or Pravṛtti and Nivṛtti, or Avidyā and Vidyā, or the secular and the spiritual. It is maintained that the two are incongruous, rather contradictory; if one has to follow the path of Mokṣa, one will have to turn back from Bhoga. This prescription is generally understood not merely in spirit, but it is also literally understood as renunciation of the wordly affairs. But the Tantrism maintains that really there is no dichotomy between the two. The Tantrist would point out that Bhukti is not only not contradictory to Mukti, but it is also congenial to the attainment of Mukti, provided the path of Bhukti, is followed in the proper way.

Bhukti is helpful in Mukti in two ways. First, it tends to work out the maturation (paripāka) of desires by actualising the potential seed-desires. Mukti is not possible unless the desires are

2. Bhukti is helpful in maturation of desires.

matured or exhausted. The seed exhausts itself by growing into a tree; this is the natural law for the exhausting of the seed. The ascetic may say here that the seed could be burnt in the very beginning without allowing it to undergo the long process of exhausting itself into a tree, and similarly the desires

1. विष्णुरूपाय वराय लक्ष्मीरूपिणीं कन्यां तुभ्यमहं सम्प्रददे ।
'Viṣṇurūpāya varāya lakṣmīrūpiṇīṁ kanyāṁ tubhyam ahaṁ sampradade'.

could be burnt in the very beginning, the malignant growth could be nipped in the very bud. The Tantrist would answer that in the case of the actual seed it can be understood all right that the seed could be burnt; but this does not happen in the case of desires. To burn the desire is not that easy. Nature also perhaps does not allow the seed-desire to be burnt;the natural process is that of exhausting into fruition. This is the Līlā (sport) of the Lord; otherwise He would not create the desires or even the world. The desire is created by the Lord with a purpose—the purpose of actualising into worldly activity, so that the sportive plan of the Lord may be fulfilled. If the desires are to be nipped in the very bud, why should He create them at all ?

We cannot also rule out the possibility of the desire being eradicated in the very beginning, for the Lord is free to grant that, and that may be a part of His Līlā; but that would be an exception and not the general rule of the sport. We cannot

3. Some objections and answers

also say that if the Lord is responsible for the creation of desires, He is also responsible for the evil caused by the desires. He has created the desires and the things desired, but He has allowed, to a limited extent, the freedom of using them in the way we choose. It is the wrong choice on *our* part that causes evil; and, therefore, it is man and not God that is responsible for evil.

So, the desires and the fulfilment of the desires are not evil in

4. The Upaniṣadic reconciliation of vidyā and avidyā.

themselves, they become evil only when we abuse them or satisfy them in an immoral way. To ignore the desires outright would certainly be an evil, because it would bring self-deception and dissociation of personality. The Upaniṣad and the Gītā also do not favour asceticism. The Upaniṣad says, "Those who worship avidyā (that is, pravṛtti or indulgence), enter into darkness; but those who worship vidyā (that is, nivṛtti or renunciation), enter into still more darkness."[1]

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1. अन्धन्तमः प्रविशन्ति येऽविद्यामुपासते ।
ततो भूय इव ते तमो य उ विद्यायां रताः ॥
andhantamaḥ praviśanti ye-avidyāmupāsate.
tato bhūya iva te tamo ya u vidyāyāṁ ratāḥ.
Īśopaniṣat, verse 9.

The best way, therefore, would be to have a synthesis of both, and so the next verse says, "One who comprehends both vidyā and avidyā together, crosses mortality with the help of avidyā, and reaches immortality with the help of vidyā."[1] The point is that both vidyā and avidyā become the spiritual means. Where is the dichotomy ?

5. Bhoga becomes Yoga.

The second way in which Bhukti is helpful in Mukti is that when the desire for Bhoga and the objects of Bhoga are taken in religious spirit, they become a help rather than a hindrance in the path of Mukti. We have already seen that in the Tantric way the world and the objects of enjoyment are taken to be the sportive manifestation (līlā-kṛtya) of the Lord; and an attitude of sanctity is developed towards them, they are revered as Śiva. This Śiva-bhāvanā is a potent means of rising above desires. The Tantra says, "In the Kaulic religion Bhoga becomes Yoga, vice becomes virtue, and the (otherwise enslaving) world becomes means to liberation."[2] "The sun dries up everything of the world by falling on everything (even on the excreta); the fire accepts everything for burning; and yet the sun and the fire remain ever pure; so also the Yogi although accepting all the bhogas, is never defiled by sin."[3] Acce-

1. विद्यां चाविद्यां च यस्तद्वेदोभयं सह ।
अविद्यया मृत्युं तीर्त्वा विद्ययाऽमृतमश्नुते ॥
Vidyāṁ cāvidyāṁ ca yastadvedobhayaṁ saha.
avidyayā mṛtyuṁ tīrtvā vidyayāmṛtamaśnute.
—Ibid. verse 11.

2. भोगो योगायते साक्षात् पातकं सुकृतायते ।
मोक्षायते च संसारः कुलधर्मे कुलेश्वरि ॥
bhogo yogāyate sākṣāt pātakaṁ sukṛtāyate.
mokṣāyate ca saṁsāraḥ kuladharme kuleśvari.
—Kulārṇava Tantra 2/24

3. सर्वशोषी यथा सूर्यः सर्वभोगी यथाऽनलः ।
योगी भुक्त्वाखिलान् भोगान् तथा पापैर्नलिप्यते ॥
sarvaśoṣī yathā sūryaḥ sarvabhogī yathānalaḥ
yogī bhuk vākhilān bhogān tathā pāpairna lipyate.
—Ibid. 9/76

pting the world as Śiva is the way to rise above the world. This is just like looking on the waves of the ocean as the ocean itself; the waves create duality and are hindrance in attaining the ocean only till we bifurcate them from ocean and do not see them as ocean. For the spiritual aspirant the entire world is a play (līlā-vilāsa) of the Divine Power. It is in this spirit that he accepts all the enjoyments of the world.

6. Enjoyment without attachment.

We have already pointed out that it is not the world and the enjoyable objects of the world that create bondage, but it is rāga (attachment) which is the real bondage, and that the rāga can be overcome not by an attitude of negation, but by a positive attitude, a positive negation as it were (as we have already discussed). It is possible to have enjoyment of the worldly objects without attachment. We would like to add that enjoyment is not only possible, but the real enjoyment of the world and happy material life is possible only when one is, even to some extent, unattached. The poor fellow who is too much with the world, cannot derive real joy from the world. One who treads the path of Mukti, fully enjoys the world unattachedly. The jīvanmukta does this out of his freedom and joy. His senses being naturally under perfect control, there is no compulsion on his part to indulge in the world. The bound man indulges in the world out of compulsion from the instinctive urge, not the freed one. The Gītā says, "One who enjoys the objects with senses which are free from rāga (attachment) and dveṣa (aversion) and which are under one's full control, does the desirable thing and attains peace and happiness."[1] Kṛṣṇa is the perfect example of this. For Him everything is His own līlā-vilāsa. In this attitude one is in bhoga and yet at the same time transcending the bhoga.

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1. रागद्वेषवियुक्तैस्तु विषयानिन्द्रियैश्चरन् ।
आत्मवश्यैर्विधेयात्मा प्रसादमधिगच्छति ।।
rāgadveṣaviyuktaistu viṣayānindriyaiścaran.
ātmavaśyairvidheyātmā prasādamadhigacchati.

—Gītā 2/46.

7. Kriyā is liberating.

Karma (action) which is generally taken to be bondage, becomes means of liberation when it is performed in the same religious spirit. The Gītā is the champion of this idea. If the world which consists of activity and enjoyment, were a hindrance to Mukti, it would be hindrance and bondage to the Creator also, which it is not. For the Creator the world is Kriyā (spontaneous activity—a concept already discussed), and so it becomes for one who seeks to become one with the Creator.

3. THE JĪVANMUKTI AND SOCIO-CULTURAL ACTIVITY

1. The classical Advaitic ideal of Jīvanmukti goes with the renunciation of the world.

One of the significant points in the Āgamic philosophy and religion, which is quite consistent with the Āgamic spirit, is that there is perfect compatibility and harmony between the jīvanmukti and the socio-cultural activity. This becomes specially significant in view of the classical Advaitism where socio-cultural activity is logically meaningless in the context of the attainment of Mukti. In Advaitism, one who aspires for Mukti, would try to dissociate oneself from the social activity, for all such activity is a disvalue for one. Indulgence in the world and worldly activities is not only useless for him but also an obstruction in the way of Self-realisation. The world is unreal and valueless (tuccha) ; it is a covering or superimposition on the Real, created by ignorance , and it must, therefore, be discarded and renounced in order to reach the Real. The Ideal of Jīvanmukti can go only with the renunciation (sannyāsa) of the world. Nivṛtti, and not pravṛtti, is the Advaitic ideal.

2. Incompatibility with the ideal of the betterment of society.

Moreover, in the classical Advaitism the person who attains Jīvanmukti, lives just to work out his remaining prārabdha-karma. He can do no positive work with regard to society, as he becomes niṣkriya (inactive). He is like one who has taken preparatory leave prior to the retirement from one's services, and counting one's days for the final retirement ; such a one loses all interest in the affairs one was previously in. The society cannot

be benefitted by him, for he has no incentive for doing good to the society. All actions cease on his part, and the world becomes for him a non-entity. He is lost to the world, as it were, and the world in turn is lost to him. In the Advaitic pattern each historical case of the attainment of Mukti is a virtual loss to the society.[1]

In the Āgamic tradition we find a different picture of the ideal of Jīvanmukti. Socio-cultural activity goes hand in hand with Self-realisation both before and after the attainment of the Jīvanmukti. Before the attainment, activity serves as means to Self-realisation; and after attainment activity naturally flows in a spontaneous way, as spontaneous activity (spanda or kriyā) is the very nature of the Self. We have already seen that indulgence in the world and performance of the social and wordly activity is not a hindrance in Self-reali-

3. Socio-cultural activity is a means to Self-realisation

1. Dr. C P. M. Namboodiry in his brilliant and a little controversial paper, 'Advaita and Indian Tradition' published in 'Vedānta and Buddhism' (CASP, Banaras Hindu University, 1968), has carefully analysed the Advaitic position to successfully show that the ideal of Jīvanmukti in the scholastic Advaitism is incompatible with the ideal of the betterment of society. He says, "Either he (the Advaitin) must find some explanation why a person who has realised Brahman still continues in the world of avidyā, and this would be tentamount to accepting that avidyā can in some sense survive Brahmajñāna... .. or he must totally deny the very possibility of jīvanmukti, which would go against the Upaniṣadic tradition......while the mumukṣu might at least take a passive interest in the affairs of the world or society, in so far as he still forms part of it, the jīvanmukta is totally and permanently dissociated from it". He further says, "the real has never had nor can ever have any relation with the illusory.... In the progress from the illusory to the real nothing that was in anyway connected with the illusory is taken up; as far as the real is concerned every accretion is illusory." He concludes, "Advaita has no concept of social progress, and has no ideal of humanitarian service."

sation. Rather, *pravṛtti* is, in the Tantric tradition, taken to be a potent means of Self-realisation. The aspirant for Self-realisation, therefore, would not renounce the world. He would, on the contrary, indulge in the worldly affairs and take part in socio-cultural activity.

4. Spontaneous activity is the very nature of the Jīvanmukta.

In the Tantric tradition, unlike in the classical Advaitism, the Real (Śiva or Self) is conceived not as inactive (niṣkriya), but kriyā or spontaneous activity is cooncelved to be the very nature of the Self. The world is taken not as a superimposition on Śiva, but as a free and active creation of Him. As kriyā is the very nature of the Self or Śiva, the Jīvanmukta (who has attained Śivahood), like a Kṛṣṇa or a Christ or a Buddha, becomes the ideal of free activity. Universal love is his very nature. He feels one with all and does good to all.[1] He spontaneously works for the cultural progress and betterment of the society. The Jīvanmukta does not act to work out his prārabdha, his prārabdha being already liquidated; he acts because spontaneous activity is his very nature. He would respond to every call, he would take active interest in the affairs of the world. While the ordinary man (paśu) does this out of his selfish interests and by straining his will, the liberated person will do this out of the universal love, and that also in a free and relaxed way; while accruing in external activity (unmeṣa), he always remains in himself.

The Jīvanmukta, freed from the personal ego, actually identifies himself with all. The Advaitin may say that so long as one sees others—so long as the *vikalpas* or the world of duality are there—

By 'Advaita' Dr. Namboodiry means the classical scholastic Advaita, and not the original Advaita of the Upaniṣads, nor the Advaita of a Vivekanand or a Raman Maharṣi.

1. The Gītā also says that such persons are busy in doing good to all (सर्वभूतहितेरताः :—Sarvabhūtahite ratāḥ). (Gītā-5/25) This is quite consistent with their knowledge of oneness with all (सर्वभूतात्मभूतात्मा —Sarvabhūtātmabhūtātmā). (Gītā-5/7)

5. It is the sense of duality and not the physical presence of duality that is bondage.

there can be no Mukti, for to see others is avidyā. The Tantrist would point out that it is not the physical presence of the 'others' and the objective world that is avidyā, but avidyā or ajñāna is to see them *as others*—to know them as different from oneself. The physical or actual presence of duality is not the bondage, for the physical duality is just a free manifestation or accretion of the Self itself; it is only the 'sense' of duality–the wrong understanding that it is different from oneself—that is the bondage, and it is this that is called *'māyīya mala'* (the ignorance arising out of the sense of duality). An illustration may help clarify the point. When I freely create an imaginary world in my mind, I know that the world is my own creation and that I am one with it; though I see it objectively, yet my non-duality remains intact. But when the same imagination becomes a dream, I forget the truth and take the objective dream-world to be different from me; and it is then that I am bound. To the liberated person who is woken up from the dream of duality, the world does not cease to exist, but he sees the world as the free accretion (prasāra) of his own Self. The presence of the world of duality does uot hamper his non-dual Self-realisation. We would again quote here Utpaladeva who says, "One who is identified with the Universal Self and knows 'all this is my own glory', remains in Śivahood even in the face of prevailing determinations (or duality)"[1]

Thus we see that the world and the secular activities are perfectly compatible with the attainment of jīvanmukti or Self-realisation. We would add that activity flows much more when the Self is attained. Energy or activity is natural to the Self, the ego is an obstruction to its flow; therefore, the bound soul (paśu) is not *that* active. But when the ego is silenced or removed and the Self attained, the constrained energy is released. Hence the greater flow of energy. The more one is seated in the Self, that is, the more the ego is relaxed or silenced, the more the Self expresses itself in the form

6. The release of energy.

1. 'Sarvo mamāyaṁ vibhava ityevaṁ parijānataḥ.
Viśvātmano vikalpānāṁ prasarepi maheśatā.'
—Īśvara-pratyabhijñā 4/1/12

of creative activity. And since the Self-realisation is the state of universal love, the creative activity is generally directed towards the welfare of the society.

In the case of partial Self-realisation this energy may, in the spiritually untrained persons, take a destructive turn, but that is because the Self is now ignored and the ego takes the mastery of the released energy. The mythology of Asuras (demons) suggests this. Many of the famous Asuras first performed *tapasyā* (self-mortification—wnich is symbolic of the mortification of the ego) and did intense devotion to Lord Śiva. As a result the Lord being pleased granted them unusual power which they later on misused, and also were punished on that account. This simply means that when the lower self submits to the Higher Self, the power of the Higher Self is released; but the lower self still not being fully enlightened, there is the possibility of the abuse of this power, which ultimately must also meet its punishment. The point is that all energy constructive or destructive is from the Higher Self anyway. When one displays tremendous creativity and work in any field--secular or religious--one is, even partially, in unity with the Self.

7. The abuse of energy is due to the untrained ego.

Aesthetic creativity too ensues from the Self. The ānanda of the Self expresses itself in creativity in art also. The Upaniṣad too maintains the Self to be of the nature of aesthetic joy (*raso vai saḥ*). That is why all the esoteric and mystic language which flows from that state, becomes poetic. The Vedas and the Upaniṣads themselves are the examples of this.

The sublime creative act ivity it not a result of the straining of the will, but it is a spontaneous expression of the Self. A real poet does not compose by forcing his will; poetry in the true sense of of the term flows--and it flows from the Self. The poet is to some extent in communion with the Self, which is the fountain-head of all beauty and creativity. The rich artistic creativity which we find in the history of Indian culture, can be well explained on the basis of this Āgamic theory. According to the classical Advaitism, however, all such creative activity would be due to avidyā (ignorance) and not due to the Self—a theory which leads to the absurdity of

thinking that all the great and inspired work of art is the creation of ignorant mind and not of enlightened one.

9. The origin of art is Āgamic.

About the origin of almost all the arts it is traditionally believed and also expressly said in the Hindu scriptures that they have come from Lord Śiva; all the arts – poetry, music, dance, architecture, and so on are Āgamic. The origin of all the arts and aesthetic disciplines from Śiva may be sheer mythology, but it suggests a truism, namely, that the artistic creativity originates from the Self or Śiva.

10. The spiritual and the secular are one.

So, the path of Self-realisation or Śiva-prāpti is not devoid of earthly beauty; it is rich with creativity, fulfilment and love for the fellow-beings. The celestial and the terrestrial, the spiritual and the secular, the transcendent and the immanent, go hand in hand. The two are not exclusive of each other; in fact, the immanent or the secular is the free expression of the transcendent or the spiritual; and in this sense the two are one.

11. Sahaja-samādhi is the highest state of consciousness.

It also follows that *Nirvikalpa Samādhi* advocated by the Sāṁkhya and the Pātañjala Yoga and also accepted by the Advaitin, is not the highest Samādhi. The highest or the ultimate is what is called *Sahajāvasthā* or *Sahaja Samādhi*. In the Nirvikalpa stage all the *vikalpas* (modifications of mind) are silenced, and therefore, all activity ceases. This is, according to Tantrism, a stage prior to the attainment of the final one; and so this may be called the penultimate and not the ultimate. The *vikalpa* aroused from motives and desires must cease before the attainment of the ultimate stage; but it does not mean that the natural vikalpas or the vikalpas aroused out of the freedom of the Self should also cease. Sahajāvasthā (the 'Natural' state of Consciousness) is desireless (nirāśansa) and egoless (nirabhimāna), and therefore, there are no vikalpas (or activity) caused by desire or motive; but the natural and free vikalpas flow automatically. Hence spontaneous activity in the state of Sahaja-samadhi. Mystic saints have always mentioned the sahajāvasthā as the highest form of Samādhi.

4. JÑĀNA AND KRIYĀ ARE NOT TWO SEPARATE PATHS.

1. Attaining the Self is a question of receding back.

Śaṅkarācārya maintains that jñāna and kriyā (or Karma as he would understand it) are diametrically opposed to each other like light and darkness. Karma leads forward, or it takes one away from the Self; the Self is already there in the ground which can be reached only by retiring or receding and not by moving forward. In other words, the Self can be attained only by jñāna, which is something like retiring to the centre (which is the Self), and not by karma which is like running away from it. Śaṅkarācārya, therefore, not only rejects Karma, but he rejects even the combination of jñāna and karma (jñāna-karma-samuccaya).[1] Jñāna should not be understood as verbal knowledge of the Real; jñāna is the actual attainment of the Real which lies at the back or in the ground of everyone and everything. It is not something outside to be acquired afresh by karma; and so attaining the Real is a question of withdrawing back or receding to the original ground, rather than moving forward.

2. According to Śaṅkara Karmaniṣṭhā is preparatory to jñānaniṣṭhā.

With this basic insight Śaṅkarācārya, however, is in some difficulty while interpreting the Gītā which maintains in unequivocal terms that Karmayoga directly leads to Self-realisation. In his Gītā-bhāṣya he interprets the position of the Gītā to say that when Karma is performed in the spirit of offering it to God (Īśvarārpaṇabuddhyā) and without the desire for fruit (phalābhisaṁdhivarjita), then it works self-purification (Sattvaśuddhi)[2] and thereby makes one fit[3] for tne jñānaniṣṭhā, the jñāna-niṣṭhā being the direct road to Self-realisation. He accepts that in the Gītā the Lord teaches Karmayoga to Arjuna, but maintains that it is because Arjuna is Karmādhikārī.[4]

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1. Gītā Śāṅkara Bhāṣya (Gita Press) P. 27-31 & P. 77-82
2. Ibid. Introduction (P. 15)
3. Ibid. -3/3 (p. 85)
4. Gītā Śāṅkara Bhāṣya (Gita Press)-2/10 (p. 25-26)

3. The problem of karma being opposite of Self-realisation.

The insight that the attainment or realisation of the Self is a question of receding back or relaxing to the ground, is logically sound and cannot, therefore, be brushed aside by the logical mind. Every system of Indian philosophy accepts this, Tantra too accepts karma as bondage or dirt (mala); it is called Kārma or Kārmaṇa mala.[1] But the logical problem in the Gītā arises; if Karma leads in the opposite direction, how can it help reach the goal ? Even if it is 'phalābhisaṁdhi-varjita' and is performed with a spirit of 'Īśvarārpaṇa', how can it purify, for it is identified as essentially binding ? How can the presence of fire, if it is fire, bring cold ?

4. The Gītā teaches Kriyā and not Karma.

The Tantrist would answer this question by saying that what the Gītā teaches is not 'Karma' ; the Gītā itself holds Karma to be bondage.[2] What it teaches is Kriyā, a phenomenon which we have already tried to identify in our experience. Kriyā is not voluntary ethical action (karma), but it is automatic or natural or spontaneous activity, in which one is not a doer (for one does not exert one's will) and yet activity flows through one automatically, so to say. We have already pointed out that in India there is a deep rooted tradition of actionless or passive activity, which is jñāna and Kriyā—relaxation and activity—both in one. The Lord asks Arjuna to resign his will and surrender to the Lord (Higher Self). Arjuna is required to become a medium (nimitta) and allow the cosmic divine activity to flow through him;[3] this would be the spontaneous flow of activity of his own higher Self. In such a state one, although indulging in activity, is not a doer.[4] This is a state of activity and relaxation both in one. One is seated in the Self, and activity goes on spontaneously.[5] It is, therefore, jñāna and kriyā

5. Jñāna and Kriyā are one.

1. I. P. V.-3/2/8 (p. 225)
2. Gītā-3/9
3. Gītā -11/33-34
4. कर्मण्यभिप्रवृत्तोऽपि नैव किञ्चित्करोति सः ।
Karmaṇyabhipravṛttopi naiva kiñcit karoti saḥ. Gītā -4/20
5. Gītā-5/8-9

both in one. And the Gītā declares in unambiguous terms that the two are one.[1]

6. Śaṅkarācārya misses the Kriyā-concept.

What Śaṅkarācārya misses in the interpretation of the Gītā is the distinction between Kriyā and Karma, and he fails to appreciate that the Gītā is actually teaching Kriyā (and not Karma) which is one with jñāna, and which,instead of being 'preparatory to jñāna-niṣṭhā' directly leads to Self-realisation. Śaṅkara cannot appreciate the point that jñāna and Kriyā are two aspects of one and the same state of consciousness, because he starts with the presupposition that the Self or Consciousness is a state of pure jñāna (and no Kriyā), all Kriyā (or Karma as he would understand it) being illusory. But the presupposition itself is questionable.

7. Jñāna is not verbal knowledge but the state of inner change (pauruṣa jñāna).

It is not also that jñāna and Kriyā as sādhanās are different in the beginning and they become one only in the end. Our contention is that the two are interpenetrating from the very beginning. If we analyse the concept of what is called jñāna, we will find that it is not intellectual or verbal knowledge, otherwise all the erudite pandits would become Mukta. Jñāna necessarily involves a change or transformation in the inner person. It is here that the Tantra introduces the concept of 'Pauruṣa-jñāna'(spiritual knowledge or realisation) as distinguished from the 'bauddha-jñāna' (intellectual or verbal knowledge).[2] Intellectual or verbal knowledge can be had by reading scriptures or hearing discourses; but the spiritual realisation can come only by sādhanā which means inner change or spiritual evolution. Hearing of the Śruti-vākya can cause Self-realisation only when the person is already spiritually evolved. So, jñāna involves Kriyā in so far as it (jñāna) is spiritual change.

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1. यं सन्यासमिति प्राहुर्योगं तं विद्धि पाण्डव ।
Yaṁ sannyāsamiti prāhuryogaṁ taṁ viddhi pāṇḍava. -Gītā-6/2
2. See Tantrāloka-1/36-40 (P. 73. to 76)
also Tantrāloka-1/2 4 *Viveka* (pp. 56-75)

8. Kriyā is the correlate of jñāna.

It is quite understandable that doing actions like the performance of sacrifice (yajña), tīrthāṭana (pilgrimage), etc., do not help bring jñāna unless the inner change occurs; and as such they are irrelevant and unnecessary. It is also understandable that Śaṅkarācārya is actually against the Mīmāṁsā view which enjoins performance of yajña, etc. The Tantra itself condemns such actions as irrelevant[1]. But the point is that the activity in the form of the inner change which causes spiritual realisation (pauruṣa-jñāna), is the correlate of knowledge (jñāna). In this sense the Āgamic theory is complementary to the Advaitic view of pure jñānaniṣṭhā. The so-called pure jñānaniṣṭhā of 'I am Brahman' type (ahaṁ brahmāsmi so Śivoham) inflates the ego and throws the sādhaka into double ignorance. The Tantra says, "One who clings to the worldly pleasures and at the same time calls himself a Brahmajñānī, is fallen from karma and Brahman both; he should be discarded as an outcast."[2]

5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE VĀMA-MĀRGA (KAULA-MĀRGA).

What is called the Kaula-mārga or Vāma-mārga (the leftist way) is the result of the Tantric insight of using the so-called profane material in such a way as to make divinity out of it. In the Kaula-sādhanā there are used five 'M's (pañca-makāra , namely, Madya (wine), Māṁsa (meat), Mīna (fish), Mudrā (special psycho-physical disposition) and Maithuna (sexual intercourse). Some persons interpret the Kaula-sādhanā of five 'M's as merely symbolic, but our view is that the above sādhanā is literal and not symbolic. The Tantras vividly and graphically describe the actual process of the worship together with the detailed rituals. The description is meant to be taken literally and not symbolically. Moreover, the Kaula-sādhanā has been an actual

1. See Kulārṇava Tantra, Chapter one, verses 73 to 107 (p. 8 to 11)

2. सांसारिकसुखासक्तं ब्रह्मज्ञोऽस्मीति वादिनम् ।
कर्मब्रह्मोभयभ्रष्टं तं त्यजेदन्त्यजं यथा ॥
Saṁsārika-sukhāsaktaṁ brahmajñosmīti vadinam.
Karma-brahmobhayabhraṣṭaṁ taṁ tyajedantyajaṁ yathā.
—Kulārṇava Tantra 1/78

living tradition in several parts of India, specially in Kashmir, Assam, Bengal and Orrissa. Failing to catch the rationale of the sādhanā, some people take the five 'M's as mere symbolism. We propose to present in the following pages the rationale of the Kaula-sādhanā. We do not mean that the five 'M's cannot be construed symbolically; what we mean is that the Tantra means the 'M's literally and not symbolically.

The Kaula-sādhanā aims at the sublimation of desires (vāsanā). Underlying the sādhanā is the psychological truth that so long as we have an antagonistic and contemptuous attitude towards vāsanās (specially sex), we are not able to overcome them; rather we unconsciously repress them, and it results in an unconscious self-deception and dissociation of personality. But when instead we develop a religious attitude towards sex and feel it to be no less sanctified, we are able easily to overcome and transcend it. Moreover, the vāsanā is a form of energy and it cannot be destroyed or annihilated as such; it can only be sublimated or transformed into higher and subtler levels like love, aesthetic creativity, etc. This is the secret of the Kaula worship which is a natural offshoot of the Āgamic (Tantric) religion. An extreme picture of this sādhanā is to be found in the practice of the Aghorīs who administer filth and excreta.

1. The idea of sublimation.

One may ask the question : what is the necessity at all of sublimating sex; why not let it remain as it is ? The following is the answer. The Tantric presupposition is that sex is a power or energy (śakti). The energy is responsible for all joy and all creativity in different areas of life. The same energy expresses itself in different forms—in the gross form of physical sex-union, and in the finer and sublimated forms of love-experience and aesthetic enjoyment on the mental plane. No creativity and enjoyment are possible unless the sex-energy, symbolically called Kuṇḍalinī, is to some extent awakened. The beauty of the Tantric insight lies in the following discoveries, namely, (i) that one and the same energy , call it Kāma-śakti or Libido, works in every form of enjoyment gross and refined;

2. The necessity of sublimation.

(ii) that it is the same Kāma-śakti which also works in every form of creativity; (iii) that the more the libidinal energy is made to express itself through higher channels, the more joy it gives and the more creativity it brings; and (iv) that the more the sex-energy is elevated to higher levels, the more the sex-problems automatically dissolve, for the sublimated form of sex-energy is synthesis of śreya (the good) and preya (the beautiful or the pleasant).

3. Kuṇḍalinī as the symbol of sex-energy.

In the Tantric tradition the Kāma-śakti is symbolically equated with what is called Kuṇḍalinī. In ordinary persons, it is said, Kuṇḍalinī in the form of a coiled serpent with face downwards, is lying almost asleep in the Mūlādhāra Cakra (the plexus just below the origin of the sex-organ in the body). This means that ordinarily sex-energy is lying dormant in us. The little awakening it has at the lowest or grossest level (mūlādhāra) is directed downwards (adhomukha) in the animal enjoyment of sex. This Kuṇḍalinī has to be awakened, its face is to be raised upwards, and it has to be caused to rise higher through all the Cakras, finally reaching the highest stage of Śivahood or Divinity in the Sahasrāra Cakra (the plexus situated in the uppermost region of the brain). This is nothing but the symbolic story of the process of the travel of sex-energy from the lowest level of gross enjoyment to the highest level of divinity.

Now, if this Tantric presupposition is true, then keeping sex restricted to the gross level would mean drainage of energy, less joy and less creativity. In other words, sex energy which could be utilised to give tremendous joy and power, is simply wasted, So, the problem arises : how to sublimate or elevate the sex-energy in order that it could be utilised in the best way.

The essence of the Kaula-sādhanā as far as sex is concerned, and which indicates the rationale of the Sādhanā, is to cultivate two things, namely, (i) a feeling of sanctity or reverence towards sex, and (ii) feeling of love towards the sex-partner. The external ritualistic paraphernalia is just to help cultivate these two feelings.

4. The profane or the unholy is worshipped as holy.

As contrary to the contemptuous attitude towards sex preached by the negativistic and cynically ascetic traditions, Tantrism teaches to cultivate a feeling of sanctity towards sex; one should practise to feel that sex is something holy and divine. The same attitude is to be cultivated towards the object of sex; say, for example, a beautiful woman should be looked upon as the incarnation of the Divine Śakti, and man should be regarded by the woman as Śiva. The cult of Kumārī-pūjā (virgin worship) [which is accepted also by the Rightists with the exception of the worship of the sex-organ (yoni) of the virgin], is a form of the same sādhanā. What is generally taken as the most ignoble and profane (as is represented by the 'M's—Makāras) is required to be taken as something sanctified and divine, as Śiva. Stretching this logic to its extremity, even things like filth, urine and excreta are to be accepted in the same vein, which the Aghorī-sādhaka does. In the Aghorī-sādhanā the urine, for example, is called the Holy water (Śivāmbu).[1] It is our egoity and ignorance, the Tantrist would say, to regard things as aśiva (non-*Ś*iva or unholy). The Vāma-sādhanā is an efficacious technique of curing one of one's egoity and ignorance.

5. Difference between being unclean and being unholy.

The Tantra, of course, does not prescribe to smear filth on the body, nor does it downrate cleanliness as a hygienic value. What it means is to expose the feeling that the filth is something unholy. There is difference between a thing being unclean and it being unholy or religiously impure. Cleanliness is a secular value, while holiness or unholiness is a religious thing. What is advised to be removed is not cleanliness but the feeling of unholiness. A concrete example will help clarify the position. A Śūdra or Cāṇḍāla, even if he has washed his body clean and is wearing clean clothes, is, in the orthodox tradition, taken to be unholy, and the very

1. Śivāmbu or the 'Holy water' (urine) has its medicinal value also. Many people in India regularly take *Ś*ivāmbu in order to cure various ailments of their body.

touch of the Cāṇḍāla would impurify or malign anything. The Tantrist would call it a wrong and egotic conception of the orthodox tradition; and in order to neutralize this wrong idea, Tantrism would prescribe the worship of the Cāṇḍāla as Śiva.[1] (The Tantra does not favour castism.) Take another example. Māṁsa (meat) in the orthodox tradition is taken to be unholy in itself, apart from the question of killing or of being tāmasika. The same is the case with fish and wine. Tantrism would not favour violence, nor would it favour drinking;[2] what it actually means is to neutralise the feeling that meat or fish or wine or anything of the kind is unholy and that the very touch of it is sacrilegious. Ordinarily urine or nightsoil is not only taken to be unclean but also to be unholy. Tantrism would accept it to be unclean, but would reject it to be unholy or sacrilegious.

6. The feeling of holiness towards sex does not drive into indulgence.

It should be made clear that cultivation of an attitude of holiness towards sex does not mean that it would drive us to indulge in sex, as the truth is just the contrary. This is actually a method of changing our attitude towards sex. When we succeed in cultivating the feeling of holiness, sex no longer confronts us as a problem, we do not feel the compulsion or the inordinate desire to indulge in sex. The sex-hater, on the contrary, is always in the

1. There is a famous story that Lord Śiva appeared in the form of a Cāṇḍāla before Śaṅkarācārya in Kāśī (Varanasi) in order to teach the erring non-dualist the lesson of equality. The story goes that Śaṅkarācārya wanted the Cāṇḍāla to keep off his way, lest his (the Cāṇḍāla's) touch would make him impure. But the Cāṇḍāla answered in a cryptic language, and the repentant Śaṅkarācārya, recognising him as Lord Śiva, fell on his feet. Many a saints have been reported to have used the Tantric methods in order to correct some of their rigid disciples.

2. अनाघ्रेयमनालोक्यमस्पृश्यञ्चाप्यपेयकम् ।
मद्यं मांसं पशूनान्तु कौलिकानां महाफलम् ॥
anāghreyam anālokyam aspṛśyañcāpyapeyakam.
madyaṁ māṁsaṁ paśūnāntu kaulikānāṁ mahāphalam—
Kulārṇava Tantra 2/124

the bitter confrontation with sex, and he never succeeds in winning over it. An attitude of holiness towards sex is the first step towards sex-sublimation. We generally take sex to be sinful, and Tantrism is administering a healthy antidote to this poisonous attitude.

7. The Kaula sādhanā is not meant for bhoga (enjoyment).

It should also be made clear that Tantrism does not favour hedonism. Sex-indulgence is not the end nor is it even the means. What is the end is the sublimation of the sex-energy, and the first means is to change our attitude towards sex. Some people think that the thought of sex itself is something unholy and impure. It is this erroneous attitude against which Tantrism combats. Some religious zealots have taught mankind that sex in itself is sinful; but this teaching has brought only poisonous effect. We hate sex and are all the more unable to overcome it; sex has become all the more dangerous and dreadful. Nietzsche has aptly said that the religious pontiffs poisoned sex in order to kill it, but sex is not killed, it only lives being poisonous.[1] So, the Tantric sādhanā is meant to cure or neutralise sex of its poison; it is not meant for bhoga. In the Kaula-sādhanā the actual sex-act is done not with a feeling of bhoga but with a feeling of offering it as worship to the Deity[2]; it is done as a religious act and not for sensual gratification. Doing sex with the intention of sensual gratification is repeatedly said

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1. Quoted in Acharya Rajaneesh-'संभोग से समाधि की ओर' (Anupam Pocket Books) p. 75

2. मद्यं मांसञ्च मत्स्यञ्च मुद्रा मैथुनमेव च ।
मकारपञ्चकं देवि देवताप्रीतिकारकम् ॥
madyaṁ māṁsañca matsyañca mudrā maithunameva ca.
makārapañcakaṁ devi devatāprītikārakam. Kulārṇava Tantra 10/5

in the Tantra to be sinful.[1] So, Kaulism is against both—hating sex as something sinful and base, on the one hand, and using it for sense-gratification, on the other. The Kulārṇava Tantra which prescribes the Kaula-sādhanā, itself clarifies, 'If merely by doing sexual intercourse with the woman one becomes liberated, then all the creatures in the world would become Mukta by their sex-act'.[2]

8. The phallic worship.

Now, we can understand the significance of the phallic worship, prescribed in the Tantras. The Śakti (woman) or Dūtī, as technically it is called, who is used for 'Maithuna' (sexual intercourse) in the Kaula-sādhanā, is worshipped as the Devī (Goddess). That is why she is called Śakti (the Divine Power). All the limbs of her body, specially the sex-organ, are ritually worshipped. The same is done on the male side also by the female. Worship of the phallic symbol is well-known. The male phallus (liṅga) is taken to be Śiva; and the female one (yoni) on which the liṅga is placed, is regarded as Śakti. The Śiva-liṅga symbol can also be independently interpreted to be signifying the ultimate principle, Śiva-Śakti, without connecting it with the phallus; but in the Kaula tradition it is necessarily connected with the phallus. Perhaps the very symbol originated from the phallus; and Śiva-Śakti worship is primarily the Kaula-worship.

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1. मादिपञ्चकमीशानि देवताप्रीतये सुधी : ।
यथाविधि निषेवेत तृष्णया चेत् स पातकी ॥
mādi pañcakamīśāni devatā-prītaye sudhīḥ.
yathāvidhi niṣeveta tṛṣṇayā cet sa pātakī.
Kulārṇava Tantra-10/6

2. शक्तिसम्भोगमात्रेण यदि मोक्षो भवेत वै ।
सर्वेऽपि जन्तवो लोके मुक्ताः स्युः स्त्रीनिषेवनात् ॥
Śakti-sambhoga mātreṇa yadi mokṣo bhaveta vai.
Sarvepi jantavo loke muktāḥ syuḥ ṣtrīniṣevanāt.
-Kulārṇava-Tantra 2/119

9. The worship of Lord Cupid, and sex-images on the holy shrines.

Ancient Indians, it seems, had translated this Tantric wisdom into practice. They religiously worshipped sex-god as any other god. We find in ancient Sanskrit literature references to the worship of Madana or Kāma-deva (Lord Cupid) on a particular day of the year, Vasantapañcamī, the beginnning of the spring season.[1] Many of the temples in India (such as, Khajuraho, Konarka, etc.) are amply carved with sex-images. This may not be religious perversion or expression of the repressed sex, but this seems to be a deliberate attempt, quite in line with the Tantric tradition, to give sex religious status, so that people may understand that sex is as religious and holy as anything.

10. The snake-worship.

Snake which is the symbol of sex,[2] is also considered, in the Hindu tradition, to be an object of worship. This is in contrast with the Christian conception in which serpent is taken to be a symbol of evil. The festival of snake-worship on the day of Nāgapañcamī is a living tradition. Moreover, according to the Hindu mythology, Lord Viṣṇu rests on the Śeṣa-nāga (the Divine Serpent); and snake is the very ornament of Lord Śiva's neck. This means that Viṣṇu and Śiva, the ideal integral personalities, have not killed or suppressed—but befriended or sublimated—the snake (or sex).

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1. (a) 'अहं पुनर्जानामि न भवतो न कामदेवस्य ममैवैकस्य ब्राह्मणस्यायं मदन-महोत्सवो यस्य प्रियवयस्येनैवं मन्यते'

—श्रीहर्षः रत्नावली (मोतीलाल बनारसीदास) पृ. २२

(b) 'काञ्चनमाले, प्रतिष्ठापयाशोकमूले भगवन्तं प्रद्युम्नम् ।' —वही, पृ. ४०

(c) 'कुसुमसुकुमारमूर्तिदधती नियमेन तदनुतरं मध्यम् ।
आभाति मकरकेतोःपार्श्वस्था चापयष्टिरिव ।।' —वही पृ. ४०

(d) 'वसन्तोत्सवोपायनलोलुपेनार्यगौतमेन कथितं त्वरतां भट्टिनीति ।'

—कालिदासः मालविकाग्निमित्रम् (कालिदास ग्रन्थावली; का०हि०वि०वि० पृ. २८९–९०)

2. Depth-psychologists, while studying snake-dreams and snake-phobia, have found out that the snake-symbol is somehow unconsciously related with sex. So the attitude towards snake is suggestive of the attitude towards sex.

There is also another mythology that the earth rests upon the hood of the Śeṣa-nāga (the Divine Serpent). This may mean that all the activities of the world are based on sex—an idea akin to that of Freud.

11. The attitude of holiness towards sex in the rightist scriptures.

This attitude towards sex is the speciality of the Tantrism which is taken to be the leftist tradition in India. But this attitude can also be found in the rightist scriptures like the Upaniṣad and the Gītā. In the Taittirīya Upaniṣad the sādhaka is advised to feel as a part of his sādhanā that the working in the hands and locomotion in the feet are Brahman[1]; and in the same continuation it is said, "Brahman is present in the sex-organ in the form of reproduction, amṛta and joy',[2] In the Gītā the Lord says, 'I am the libido which reproduces'[3]; and 'I am, in the living beings, the feeling of sex unopposed to morality[4]'. In the Śrīmadbhāgavata it is said, 'some others say-God is libido'[5]. Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣat, while referring to the sex-yajña (what is called Kaula yajña or Kula-yāga in the Tantras), says, "O Gautama, the woman is the fire, her sex-organ is the fire-wood, the hairs on the sex-organ are smoke, vagina is the flame, the penetration (sexual intercourse) is the aṅgāra, the sexual joy is the spark; in that gods offer semen, and out of that oblation the puruṣa is born''.[6] Almost the same

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1. 'कर्मेति हस्तयोः गतिरिति पादयोः'
'Karmeti hastayoḥ gatiriti pādayoḥ'—Taittirīya Upaniṣad —10/2-3
2. 'प्रजातिरमृतमानन्द इत्युपस्थे'
'Prajātiramṛtamānanda ityupasthe' —Ibid. 10/2-3
3. 'प्रजनश्चास्मि कंदर्पः'
'prajanaścāsmi kandarpaḥ' --Gītā 10/28
4. 'Dharmāviruddho bhūteṣu kāmosmi bharatarṣabha.'-Gītā 7/11
5. 'Puṁsaḥ kāmamutāpare' —Śrīmadbhāgavata--4/11/22
(पुंसः काममुतापरे)
6. " योषा वा अग्निर्गौतम तस्या उपस्थ एव समित् लोमानि धूमो योनिरर्चिः यदन्तः करोति तेङ्गारा अभिनन्दाविस्फुलिङ्गाः तस्मिन्नेतस्मिन्नग्नौ देवा रेतो जुह्वति तस्या आहुत्यै पुरुषः सम्भवति........।" --Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣat - 6/2/13

words occur in the Chāndogyopaniṣat also.[1] These statements tend to suggest that sex in itself should be taken not as something sinful, but as something divine.

Someone, say an existentialist phenomenologist, may ask : why take sex as something divine or holy or anything of the sort, why not take sex as it is, that is, as given in experience; why to exert pressure on sex to perform an unnatural function of acting as divine ? In answer it may be pointed out that the Kaula-sādhanā is a yoga, a technique of sublimating the sex-energy, and so it is bound to use sex in a modified way. If sex is used as it is given in nature, without altering it, then this would not be Yoga, rather this would simply be Bhoga or enjoyment which all people including animals are already doing. If sex is to be used as a Sādhanā or Yoga, then naturally it has not to be taken as it is. Cultivation of the feeling of reverence towards sex is a deliberate effort on our part—a yoga–; and this is part of the yoga of sex-sublimation.

12. Why sex is not conceived exactly as given in nature.

The second prescription of Kaulism regarding sex is that one should aim at loving the sex-partner. It is enjoined that the sex-partner should be felt as completely one's own—one's own Śakti in the case of woman, and one's own Śiva in the case of man (from the side of the woman). One should cultivate a complete sense of non-duality towards the sex-partner. This is nothing but an ardent way of saying that one should intensely love the partner. In this connection it is necessary to point out the meaning of love which is aimed at. Love is essentially a spiritual quality. Loving a person would mean two things, namely, (i) wishing good of the person that he or she may be well and happy, and (ii) feeling oneness with the person—feeling that he or she is one's own—or one's own self. These two aspects of love are complementary to each other. There is a third aspect of love which cannot be cultivated; it comes automatically. This is the aesthetic aspect where the object of love appears beautiful and gives immense joy and satisfaction to the lover. The intensity

13. Love is the main factor in the Kaula sādhanā.

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1. Chāndogyopaniṣat 5/8/1-2

of the third aspect depends upon the intensity of the first two aspects which can well be cultivated.

Love automatically sublimates sex. The entire feeling of sex is transformed into love so to say. There is interchangability between love and sex. Just as water can become vapour and the vapour can again be liquified into the grosser form of water; so also sex can, by the fire of love, be transformed into the deep aesthetic satisfaction which is the third aspect of love. And if love cools down, it may again be turned into the grosser form of sex. Thus love is the transforming factor. The Tantric advice, therefore, is that one should do sex not for sex-enjoyment itself but as an expression of love; that is to say, do sex not as sex but as love. Just as when we kiss a child to express our love, kissing becomes a part of love itself; so also sex can be done entirely as expression of love. And this elevates sex beyond measure. Sex no longer remains sex, but becomes love. In the context of sex there is nothing so purifying and so elevating as love. The feeling of love towards a woman or man (whatever the case may be), combined with the feeling of adoration (as mentioned earlier), is the surest means of the sublimation of sex-desire.

14. Sex is sublimated into love.

15. Sex-act as a deliberate expression of love.

The feeling of love sublimates the crude animal sex on the one hand, and it cures the mechanical and lifeless sex-act of its insipidity and barrenness. It so happens in some cases that persons, although indulging in sex-act in order to derive gratification and joy therefrom, do not get sufficient pleasure or satisfaction; sex becomes mechanical and lifeless. There may also ensue sexual frigidity and mental impotence. The insipidity and lifelessness of sex-life occurs not in isolated cases; this is the general predicament of the ultra-modern free-sex society. All free-sex cultures suffer from this malady. This happens also in the case of married couples when after lapse of time the warmth of love cools down and the mechanical sex-union takes its place. The dilemma of sex-life is that if sex is ignored and repressed, it creates psychological abnormality; if sex is made an end in itself and enjoyed freely for its own sake, it becomes after

16. Love cures sex of its insipidity and lifelessness.

some time devoid of relish and flavour. Therefore, taking sex purely for bhoga defeats its own purpose.

17. The joy of sex is borrowed from love.

Kaulism is the way out of this dilemma; the cultivation of love is the remedy for the barrenness of sex-life. Sex becomes mechanical and lifeless only when it is devoid of love, that is, when the sex-partner no longer remains an object of love, and becomes just an object of sex enjoyment. It is love which cures sex of its insipidity and makes it pleasant and satisfying. Just as the light by which the moon shines, does not belong to the moon itself, but comes from the sun; so also the joy of sex-life comes from love. Love is something independent; it has, like the light of the sun, independent joy, and it can give joy even without sex. But sex is dependent on love for its joy; sex wanting in love has no life. If one is selfish and devoid of the capacity of loving, one would be denied the real pleasure in sex. If sex, and no love, becomes the sole object of the man-woman relationship, then it defeats its own purpose. This is the paradox of sex-life. and so the malady of insipid sex from which the free-sex culture suffers, can be cured only by the cultivation of love.

18. Love incorporates within itself the feeling of sanctity towards sex.

Thus we see that love has a dual function in relation to sex, namely, that (i) it supplies joy and satisfaction to sex, and (ii) in that very process it also sublimates sex by absorbing sex within itself. The feeling of sanctity towards sex (mentioned earlier) is incorporated in love, for there is a natural feeling of piety in love. There is nothing so holy and so good as love. So, when sex is done as an act or expression of love, and the minds of the persons involved are fixed not on sex-enjoyment but on love, then the first injunction of the Kaula-mārga, namely, the feeling of sanctity towards sex, is already fulfilled; love naturally sanctifies sex. The second injunction, namely, the feeling of love towards the sex-partner, therefore, is the complete way.

The Tantric or Kaulic way of life solves the Freudian dilemma. The dilemma which confronted Freud. is that if sex is condemned and suppressed then it creates abnormality and disinte-

gration of personality; and if sex is given a free lance, then man becomes no better than animal, and there is no social or cultural life worth the name. Sigmund Freud, although reeognising sublimation of sex brought about by Nature itself. did not have the idea of there being conscious and deliberate methods of transforming or sublimating sex. Tantrism presents a deliberate method, a Yoga, by which we can sublimate sex at will.

19. The Freudian dilemma.

When sex is so sublimated, the problem of the dissociation of personality as well as the problem of social and cultural life automatically dissolves. The state of sex-sublimation is a happy synthesis of the two—of what is called Preya (the pleasant) and of what is called Śreya (the good or the beneficial). Love amazingly synthesizes within itself the pleasure of sex also. The perfect lover finds his sex desire automatically gratified, even more intensely. When sex-feeling is transformed or sublimated to higher and subtler levels, it neither creates disintegration in the individual nor does it pose problems in the social and cultural life. On the contrary, it integrates the individual personality on the one hand, and it adds to the richness and beautification of social and cultural life, on the other.

20. Sex-sublimation is a synthesis of 'Śreya' and 'Preya'.

The Sociologist's problem of sex-crimes is also solved thereby. Sex-crimes are indicative of the want of love. If the inordinate animal sex-impulse is caressed by the soothing feeling of love, no sex-crime is possible. We do not mean that sex-crimes should not be punished (of course, they must); what we suggest is that the internal education of sex through love and feeling of sanctity should also be taken into account. Love naturally makes a man good and holy. It reconciles one's own good with the good of the other person who is the object of one's sex-desire. If sex is perfectly intuned with love, nothing remains immoral or sinful in sex. In fact it is the loveless sex which is the real sin; and it is this that activates sex-crimes. What is sometimes termed as love and is sometimes responsible even for the murder of the beloved

21. Sex-sublimation solves the problem of sex-crimes.

by the lover, is really not love; it is simply a violent flare of the sexual and emotional selfishness of the so-called lover.

22. The insight of using the so-called filthy material and transforming it to serve better purpose.

The analogy of manure.

The Tantric insight lies in using the already given material namely, the sex-life, and transforming it. The insight pertains to winning over Nature with the help of the laws of Nature itself. Sublimation or transformation too is the law of nature, just as the given material—the sex-desire--is part of nature. We already do sex, so why not do it or use it in such a way as to derive the best possible results ? The Tantric treatment of sex could be likened to the agriculturist's treatment of the so-called dirty material, say garbage and excreta. The agriculturist uses the garbage, etc, in such a way as to make the best manure for the high yielding crops. Nature has provided the plant with a process of transformation. The same unagreeable socalled dirty material of the manure, when being sucked by the roots passes through the plant, becomes something very desirable. The foul odour of the excreta is turned into the fragrant smell of the flower; the untouchable nightsoil is changed into the joyfully edible fruit or corn which the plant yields. If we condemn and just throw away the manuring material because it is dirty, then would it not be an act of dire foolishness ? Moreover, the scientist would say that chemically there is nothing dirty or filthy in the garbage or excreta; it becomes dirty only when it is denied its proper use and is allowed to rot and spread the foul stinking odour. The Tantrist, like the chemist, would say that there is nothing dirty or sinful in the idea of sex in itself. It becomes dirty only when it is put to immoral and unsocial use. (That is why the Lord in the Gītā says that sex, *unopposed to morality*, is God[1]). But when, like the manure, it is sublimated or transformed into the higher level of, say, love, aesthetic enjoyment, creativity in all walks of life (artistic, intellectual, social), Bhakti, social service, and so on, then it becomes all acceptable and appreciable like the fragrance and fruit of the plant. The flower

1. Gītā—7/11.

and fruit are nothing but the filth transformed; and so are the higher things in relation to sex. The Tantrist, therefore, recognises the given material of sex and exploits it to serve a healthy and worthy purpose.

23. Why sex is given unusual importance.

The above position also answers the question why sex is given unusual importance in the Tantric tradition. Sex is the main energy or *the* energy, the Kuṇḍalinī, which leads to Bliss when it is raised or sublimated. Sex is given importance not for sex itself, but because it is sex which forms the crude material which would be transformed into the higher spiritual value so covetously desired. Mokṣa is not possible unless sex is sublimated, nor are the higher values of the world. The crude or animal sex is indicative of the unawakened Kuṇḍalinī, the dormant Śakti lying at the gross level. This means bondage. The Śakti or Kuṇḍalinī at the gross material level creates bondage; and it is called Avidyā (ignorance). The same Śakti, when it is raised and refined, becomes means for Liberation; and it is called Vidyā. Moreover, sex confined to the gross level obstructs the flow of higher creativity like the aesthetic or intellectual one. The creative energy is released only when sex is made to rise higher. Sex-sublimation, therefore, is the clue to the attainment of the higher values of life both secular and religious.

24. Why the Kaula-sādhanā is the means of Mokṣa ?

A question may be asked here : the Kaula-sādhanā is a means of sex-sublimation all right, but how can it bring Mokṣa, the highest value of life ? In answer we would say that the Kaula or Tantric way helps bring Mokṣa for two reasons. First, it causes sex-sublimation which is a must for Mokṣa—a point which we have already seen. Secondly, it releases the flow of love which is perhaps the most essential means of Mokṣa. It is said everywhere in unequivocal terms both in the rightist and the leftist texts that it is the feeling of oneness with all—the universal love—that brings Mokṣa. One cannot be Mukta unless one loves the entire universe—unless one feels that all are one's own.

One may again question here : the Kaula-mārga may help develop the feeling of love towards the sex-partner, but how can

it serve to cultivate the universal love which is said to be the sure means of Mokṣa ? In answer we would say that the questioner is drawing nearer to the point. Love for the opposite sex is the beginning of the universal love. Nature has given in creatures of all levels an inborn attraction for the opposite sex. The feeling of love, although mixed with so many things, is naturally directed towards the opposite sex Tantrism catches hold of this clue and exploits this natural phenomenon to melt into universal love.

25. Love of the opposite sex is the beginning of the universal love.

We have already pointed out that the Tantric insight lies in picking up the material already given in Nature, and exploiting it to serve better and nobler purposes—a way which the scientist too follows. The cultivation of universal love can easily and more efficaciously begin from a point where one is already naturally loving—namely, loving the opposite sex. When one reaches sufficient degree of sex-sublimation, one can experience true love in the fullest intensity and perfection towards the opposite sex. In loving the sex-partner in the true sense of the term one can have the first glimpse of spiritual love. Love towards the opposite sex, if properly mastered, naturally paves way for the universal love. The love achieved through the sex-partner can be redirected and focussed on the whole world

Moreover, what really matters is not the number of the beloved object; it is the quality of love that matters. If in one's heart there is the flow of true and pure love even for one single person, one acquires the capacity of loving the whole world.[1] From the side of the sādhaka it does not really matter whether he truly loves one person or all. If the flow of true love is there, it will saturate whatever object comes before it—an individual or a whole world. To use a simile, what matters is the purity and intensity of light, it does not matter whether the light is

1. This can be likened to the proverb-like philosophical saying that 'if one knows a single thing in its entirety, one knows all things in their entirety.' (एको भावः सर्वथा येन दृष्टः सर्वे भावाः सर्वथा तेन दृष्टाः ।)

focussed on one single person or on the multitude. So, it is not an exaggeration to say that if one is loving one's sex-partner in the true spiritual sense (which one can very well do), one is on the way to liberation. The exalted love-stories found in the literature of every language of the world show the lovers as saintly and pure-hearted. This is not merely a poetic imagination; this is the representation of a truth of life. The true lover cannot but become saintly.

The sādhanā of sex-sublimation may be said to be a means of Mokṣa for the following reason also. We can reach the Self (Śiva) by catching the thread of spanda[1] (spontaneity) in our experience and developing it deeper and deeper. Kāma (sex) is perhaps the greatest spanda (spontaneity) in our actual experience. Of course, in ordinary experience it (sex) is tainted with impurity (*mala*), and, therefore, does not reflect perfect freedom; but it gives the clue to reach perfect spontaneity or freedom. If we catch the clue and develop it properly, we can reach the state of freedom.

The Tantra mentions three stages of the Kaula sādhanā—the Paśu, the Vīra and the Divya—which are meant for adhikārīs (competent persons) of three different stages. The 'Paśu' (animal) stage which is the lowest, is meant for the ordinary persons who have not sufficiently risen above selfishness and in whose case sex lies mostly on the crude animal level. At this stage only *yāmala* dīkṣā (initiation of the married couple) is given, that is, sex relationship is allowed only between husband and wife. In the second stage which is higher than the first one, the sādhaka is called Vīra ('hero'—spiritual hero). Here even extra-marital sex-relationship is allowed. But the conditions for being Vīra are quite high. The Vīra, although below the state of Mokṣa, stands at a sufficiently high level of sex-sublimation; he has risen above selfishness and is capable of loving anyone as his own self. Only such special persons are allowed to perform the Vīra-

26. The stages of the Kaula-sādhanā–the Paśu, the Vīra and the Divya.

1. How ordinary spanda (spontaneity) in our actual experience can be used to reach Śivahood will be discussed later (Appendix—'The Meaning of Śakti-sādhanā').

sādhanā, otherwise only the first one is prescribed. The third and the highest stage is that of the Divya (the divine or godly). There are two specialities of this stage. First, the ego of the sādhaka vanishes and he attains the state of universal love. Secondly, there is no need of physical sex-union, one can feel the same intensity of love, even more, even without the bodily union. This is something like the Platonic love in which sex reaches the purely mental or spiritual level. This is the highest level of sex-sublimation. Saints and Jīvan-muktas stand at this very level.

The classification and hierarchy in the Kaula-sādhanā implies the Tantric understanding, which is in common with the general Indian insight, that spiritually speaking all persons do not stand at the same level. Hence difference of competence or suitability of a particular stage of sādhanā (adhikāri-bheda). If the natural fact of adhikāri-bheda is ignored, it may create havoc. If, for example, the Paśu-sādhaka is allowed the extra-marital sex-relationship which is allowed only in the case of the Vīra or persons above, then this will definitely harm both the individual and the society.

27. Adhikāri-bheda in the Kaula-sādhanā.

The Kaula-sādhanā which is so significant, is also much abused. There have been impostors and pervert charlatans who have exploited the situation, and the leftist sādhanā has been subjected to considerable perversion and degeneration. These hypocrites and pseudo-Tantrists, in the name of Tantric sādhanā, actually worship their own ego and gratify their senses and do nothing else. The Tantra vehemently condemns such people.[1] They are worse than the ordinary people who use sex for sense-satisfaction, because these impostors do the same thing as the ordinary people do, with an added sin of hypocrisy. They are also responsible for misleading even the sincere people who wish to seek spiritual benefit from the sādhanā, and are frustrated in the end, for they miss the real spirit of the sādhanā. Some of the Tantrists themselves have missed the real purport of

28. Abuse of the Kaula-sādhanā.

1. See Kulārṇava Tantra, Chapter II, verses 113 to 123.

the Kaula-mārga, and have been labouring under some sort of egotism and hypocrisy; but this does not mean that on that basis we should reject the essentials of the Kaula ways. It is dogmatic to ignore the defects and dangers of the Kaula-mārga; but it is equally dogmatic to dismiss it as perversion or hypocrisy As we have seen, the Tantric way of life, having a brilliant rationale, is highly significant.

29. Restriction on the Kaula-sādhanā.

It seems, the promulgators of the Kaula-sādhanā were aware of the possible misuse of the sādhanā, and therefore, they have ordinarily restricted it to the married couples; they have not allowed the Vīra-sādhanā in the case of every-one. But this restriction has been ignored, and many socalled Tantrists who are just at the ordinary Paśu-level, pose as being Vīra and freely drink and establish extra-marital sex-relationship. It is these people who bring bad name to Tantrism and warrant just criticism from the Rightist. Vīra sādhanā is not at all meant for such ordinary people; and that is why it is kept a secret so far as the ordinary public is concerned. It is said, "Just as one guards one's wealth from the thieves, so should one guard the Kaulic religion from the laymen (paśus)".[1] The laymen are cautioned that the Kaulic path is dangerous and difficult to tread. It is said, "Treading the Kaulic way is more difficult than moving on the edge of a sword or than riding a tiger or than wearing serpent."[2] The Yāmala sādhanā (that is, between husband and wife), of course. is meant for all, as it is quite safe.

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1. यथा रक्षति चौरेभ्यो धनधान्यादिकं प्रिये ।
कुलधर्मं तथा देवि पशुभ्य: परिरक्षयेत् ॥
yathā rakṣati caurebhyo dhanadhānyādikaṁ priye.
Kuladharmaṁ tathā devi paśubhyaḥ parirakṣayet.—Kulārṇava Tantra 11/82

2. कृपाणधारागमनात् व्याघ्रकण्ठावलम्बनात् ।
भुजङ्गधारणान्नूनम् अशक्यं कुलवर्तनम् ॥
Kṛpāṇadhārāgamanāt vyāghrakaṇṭhāvalambanāt.
Bhujaṅgadhāraṇannūnamaśakyaṁ kulavartanam.
—Ibid. 2/122.

30. Why the Kaulic way is the best.

Why the Tantra claims the Kaula-sādhanā to be the best and highest of all paths,[1] is quite understandable. This is not simply an exaggerated self-eulogy; it contains truth. Sublimation of desires and universal love are the most essential things for liberation; and this can be achieved by the Tantric sādhanā easily and perfectly. Here it should be made clear that Tantrism or Kaulism is not merely particular ritualistic sex-worship, but it is a general attitude towards life—an attitude of acceptance and integration. It is a *positive* philophy of life, which assimilates life and makes it sublime. No one can be really liberated without having this attitude. In other words, Kaulism being understood in this sense, it can be safely said that no one can be liberated without being Kaula in one's attitude. To be concrete, a Ramkrishna Paramahansa or a Raman Maharsi, for instance, might not have actually followed the particular ritualistic Kaula-sādhanā; but they were certainly Kaula in their attitude towards life. So also every sincere sādhaka is and should be.

31. The state of Kaulic enjoyment is one with the state of transcendence.

In the end, it should be made clear that the state of the Kaulic enjoyment (bhoga) is not contradictory to the state of transcendence, for while doing the bhoga in the Kaulic way, one is seated in the transcendent Self enjoyng the pleasure (or bliss) of the *Self* and not of the enjoyed object, or enjoying the pleasure of the Self *through* the object. While doing the bhoga the dṛṣṭi (angle of vision) or attention of the Kaula is not on bhoga but on the Self (or on love which is natural to the Self). The moment the attention is turned from the Self to the bhoga, it is a fall (*cyuti*). Of course, it is very difficult to stick to the Self (or love) and not allow the attention to step down to bhoga; and that is why the Kaula-sādhanā is said to be as difficult as moving on the edge of a sword (asidhāra-vrata). But it is difficult only for the ego-tight 'paśu' who has not yet realised the purifying bliss of Love and is still confined to the level of selfish enjoyment; it is not difficult for the enlightened one

1. See Kulārṇava Tantra, Chapter II.

who is moving in the kingdom of egoless Love identifying the enjoyable object with one's own self.

32. The pleasure of the object comes from the Self and from the object itself.

The hedonist may question that if the attention is on the Self and not on bhoga, then it would not give the pleasure and would be like not eating the tasty morsel but offering it into the fire. In answer the Kaula would say that the pleasure (or bliss) comes automatically even much more—both in quantity and in quality— than when the attention is on bhoga. And the reason is simple : the pleasure or ānanda of the object does not come from the object itself but from the Self (or from Love natural to Self), just as the moon shines not by its own light but by the light of the sun. The Upaniṣad also says, "When 'that' shines, all this shines; all this shines by the light of 'that' " (a statement often construed by the Advaitin in the epistemological sense only, while it is stated both in the epistemological and the axiological senses).[1] All the pleasure of the world comes from the Self, only indirectly. So, if we are not seated in the Self, we would *not* be able to enjoy the world; the pleasure we take from the world is proportionate to the degree of Self-realisation we have achieved. The poet Coleridge addressing the Nature, says, "O Lady, we receive but what we give", meaning that we receive from the Nature or the world the joy that we already unconsciously project to it.[2]

The Kaula would further retort that if the attention is only on bhoga and not on the Self, it would be self-defeating. This is what happens in the case of those who enjoy sex for the pleasure of

1. तमेव भान्तमनुभाति सर्वं तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति ।
tameva bhāntamanubhāti sarvaṁ tasya bhāsā sarvamidaṁ vibhāti.

2. 'O lady ! we receive but what we give,
And in our life alone does Nature live;... ..
..... Ah; from the soul itself must issue forth
A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud
Enveloping the Earth—.'
—Samuel Taylor Coleridge : 'Dejection : an Ode'.

33. The bhogadṛṣṭi is self-defeating.

the sex itself— the sex-life after some time becomes mechanical, insipid and tasteless. As we have already seen elsewhere, the malady of the free-sex culture accounts for this. The pleasure of the sex-life is not independent; it depends on the Self or the Spirit (or the Love which is *Spiritual)*.

A final question. If the pleasure or ānanda comes from the Self itself and not from the object of bhoga, then why does the Self, independent in ānanda, accept the object of bhoga ? What is the necessity of idulging in bhoga, then ? In answer we would say that the Self, perfect and satisfied in itself, need not indulge in bhoga, and yet it does so out of its freedom (svātantrya) or what is called Spanda or Kriyā—a phenomenon we have already discussed and identified in our actual experience;[1] and this indulgence does not diminish or defile the Self, but on the contrary enriches it all the more. This is like a beautiful woman putting on ornaments; the ornaments are not beautiful in themselves (for, if an ugly woman wears ornaments, they do not beautify her; the looks of the lady becomes all the more odd.); the ornaments derive the beautifying power from the beauty of the woman herself and in turn beautify her all the more. In the case of the dṛṣṭānta (illustration), however, the ornaments are different from the lady, and in that sense at least, the lady is dependent on the ornaments; but in the case of the actual dārṣṭānta (the illustrated) the ornaments (the enjoyable objects) are self-manifestation of the Self; and so the Self is perfectly independent in the enjoyment of the objects, which is really an indirect way of self-enjoyment. And this kind of self-enjoyment is part of the *līlā* or sport of the Self.

34. Acceptance of bhoga is the freedom of the Self.

Take a concrete example. When we love a person in the true sense of the term, the love is independent, that is, the love is self-satisfied even without the physical contact with the beloved person—as exactly happens in the 'divya' stage of the Kaula-sādhanā (though ordinarily we do not find hundred per cent true love, and, therefore, dependence on the physical contact is present in some degree)—and yet the physical contact enriches the

35. The concrete example of true love.

1. See page 6 to 9.

love all the more. If there is no love, physical contact would give no joy, for the joy comes from love (and not from the physical contact), and yet, when the love is already there, the physical contact enhances it or fulfils it all the more. Acceptance of physical contact is the freedom of true love.

6. THE ĀGAMIC IS COMPLEMENTARY TO THE VEDIC.

1. The Āgamic complements the Vedic by making explicit what is implicit in the Vedic.

From what we have discussed in the foregoing pages it follows that the Āgamic or Tantric tradition, apart from being highly significant in its own right, is complementary to the Vedic or Upaniṣadic tradition. The Āgamic ***Kriyā*** complements the Vedic *jñāna*, the positive complements the negative, the immanent complements the transcendent, the yoga complements the sannyāsa, the left complements the right. The kriyā-concept, though not explicitly explained, is implicitly present in the Vedas and Upaniṣads; and the implicit is made explicit in the Āgamas (or Tantras). The Upaniṣadic utterances regarding creation clearly suggest the *kriyā* principle in Brahman. It is said that the world comes out or emanates from Brahman (*Yato vā* imāni *bhūtāni jāyante*), or that 'He willed or desired—I am alone, let myself become many' (*saikṣat ekohaṁ bahusyām*)—these statements tend to suggest *kriyā* or *Spanda*. The statement that 'all these things come out of the Bliss itself' (*ānandāddhyeva khalvimāni bhūtāni jāyante*) refers in unequivocal terms to the *Spanda*. These statements cannot be explained away by calling them fables (ākhyāyikās). The 'golden Umā or Pārvatī' (*umā haimavatī*) comes in the famous story of the *Yakṣa* (*Yakṣopākhyāna*) which occurs in the ***Kenopaniṣat***—this suggests that Brahman (*Yakṣa*) is Śiva and '*Umā*' (or *Pārvatī*) is Śakti. It is needless to say that in the Tantric tradition '*Umā*' is the symbolic synonym of Śakti.

2. The Tantra itself accepts it to be complementary.

The Tantra accepts itself as preaching ideas in line with the Vedas. In the Kulārṇava Tantra Lord Śiva says to the Devī, "The six systems of philosophy are the limbs of my body like feet, stomach, hands and head; those who differentiate them, actually dismember my body. And these are also the six limbs of the Kula;[1] therefore, O Dear, know the Vedic discipline to be Kaulic (or Tantric)".[2] Abhinavagupta, the principal philosopher of the Kāśmīra Śaiva school, extensively quoting from the Upaniṣads and the Gītā, maintains that he is perfectly in line with the Upaniṣads.

3. The seeds of the Kaula-mārga too can be found in the Vedas and Upaniṣads.

The seeds of the Kaula-mārga too can be successfully traced in the Veda and the Upaniṣads. The Bṛhadāraṇyaka and the Chhāndogya Upaniṣads mention the sex-act as a form of holy sacrifice (yajña).[3] Of course, the aim, there, is to describe the proper process of reproduction and to have the proper attitude towards sex-union, and the aim is not to worship sex as in the Kaula way in order to have sex-sublimation; but certainly there is a reverential attitude towards sex there. We find the same reve-

1. Literally the word 'Kula' means body—suggesting the body of Śiva.

2. षड्दर्शनानि मेङ्गानि पादौ कुक्षिः करौ शिरः ।
तेषु भेदन्तु यः कुर्यान्ममाङ्गं छेदयत्तु सः ॥
एतान्येव कुलस्यापि षडङ्गानि भवन्ति हि ।
तस्माद् वेदात्मकं शास्त्रं विद्धि कौलात्मकं प्रिये ॥
ṣaḍdarśanāni meṅgāni pādau kukṣiḥ karau śiraḥ.
teṣu bhedantu yaḥ kuryānmamāṅgaṁ chedayattu saḥ.
etānyeva kulasyāpi ṣaḍaṅgāni bhavanti hi.
tasmād vedātmakaṁ śāstraṁ viddhi kaulātmakaṁ priye.
— Kulārṇava Tantra 2/84-85

3. (a) See Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad (Gita Press) 6/2/13-(p. 1299)
(b) Also see ibid. 6/4/2 to 6/4/22 (p. 1336. to 1353);
(c) Also see Chāndogya-Upaniṣad (Gita Press) 5/8/1-2 (p.493-94);
(d) Also see Taittirīya Upaniṣad 10/2-3

rential attitude towards sex in the Gītā also.[1] The Tantra maintains that the Kaula-sādhanā advocated by it, is not non-vedic The Kulārṇava Tantra quotes the Vedic passages to show that the seed of the Kaula-sādhanā is very much present there.[2]

The Āgamic position differs not from the original Upaniṣadic position, but from the classical scholastic Advaita of Śaṁkara and later Śaṁkarites. The crux of the difference between the two positions is : Whether Brahman actively creates the world out of itself as its līlā or the world is a super-imposition on Brahman like the rope-snake, Brahman being neutral and uncreative.

4. The classical Advaitism is not Upaniṣadic.

The Tantrist holds that the world is a self-creation or self-projection of Śiva, whereas according to the Advaitin, Brahman, like the rope, ever remains neutral and inactive. The Upaniṣads themselves do not seem to subscribe to this non-activistic view; the Upaniṣadic Brahman actively or spontaneously creates or manifests the world out of Itself. The Advaitin interprets the simple and direct sentences of the Upaniṣads concerning the process of Creation, as fables (ākhyāyikās) invented by the Upaniṣadic seer in order to silence the impossible question of Creation. We do not also find in the Upaniṣads the distinction between Brahman and Īśvara, nor there is any theory of super-imposition. This is not to be found in the Brahma-Sūtras even. All this is the formulation of the Advaitin.

Our criticism of the classical Advaita is not that it is inconsistent. The Advaita has a sound logic and is quite consistent in so far as it keeps to the basic presuppositions with which it starts. The Advaita system starts with the basic presupposition that the Self or Consciousness is purely jñāna devoid of all activity. Anyone starting with this presupposition would, following the rules of logic,

5. The Advaitic presupposition is one-sided.

reach the same conclusion which the Advaitin reaches. But our criticism is that the very presupposition with which the Advaitin starts, is one-sided. It takes a partial view of the Upaniṣadic philosophy, the Advaitin goes on stretching and straining the simple Upaiṣadic utterances to yield unusual meanings, and formulating novel doc-

1. Gītā-7/11 & 10/28.
2. Kulārṇava Tantra 2/140-41

trines in order to explain his position consistently—doctrines which the Upaniṣads themselves do not support. Moreover, his position gives rise to many difficulties in understanding the Upaniṣads The axiological position, for example, which is almost clear in the Upaniṣads, becomes difficult to understand from the Advaitin's point of view. (see pp. 13-14)

Moreover, in so far as the Advaitin takes the world to be a super-imposition on Brahman , created by avidyā—and not as an active creation of Brahman, Brahman being purely neutral and inactive, his view amounts to creating duality between the neutral Brahman and the machinery of avidyā projecting the whole world on the unresponsive Brahman. The difficulty is that Brahman and the world fall apart. The Advaitin being complacent with his two-level truth-theory, seems to forget that the non-duality of Brahman can be preserved only if the world is taken to be a self-creation (or self-projection) of Brahman and not merely as a super-imposition on the neutral and inactive Brahman. The Advaitin may refer to the concept of Īśvara and say that there is no duality between Brahman and avidyā, because avidyā is the Śakti of Īśvara, and the world is a self-projection of Īśvara through āvidyā-śakti. But in so far as the Advaitin does not take Īśvara to be ultimately real, and maintains difference between Brahman and Īśvara, the problem of duality remains just the same ; it only shifts from the duality of Brahman and avidyā to the duality of Brahman and Īśvara.

6. The Advaitin amounts to create duality between Brahman and the world.

The Advaitin should either derecognise the distinction between Brahman and Īśvara and say that the self-projection of Īśvara is the self-projection of Brahman, or he would land in the duality between Śakti-*less* Brahman (which has nothing to do with the world) and Śakti-*ful* Īśvara (who is the creator and governor of the world). The problem cannot be solved simply by calling Īśvara and His world false, for the world is not pure nothing (*asat*); as

7. The distinction between Brahman and Īśvara is problematical.

appearance it has epistemic or ideal reality; and as such it has to be absorbed in the Real by making it the free expression *of* the Real (and not merely a superimposition *on* the Real) if the non-duality of the Real is to be preserved. This is exactly what the Kāśmira Śaivism does.

8. The Tantric position is consistent with the Upaniṣads more than the classical Advaita is.

The Upaniṣadic position could be construed in a way other than that of the Advaitin – even more consistently and more comprehensively. There could well be an Upaniṣadic Advaita different from the classical scholastic Advaita. A Vivekanand or a Sri Aurobindo or a Rabindranath Tagore, or even a Raman Maharsi would be nearer to the Upaniṣads than the classical Advaitin is. The Upaniṣadic Advaita is not inactivistic, nor is it world-negating in the scholiast's sense. The Transcendence of Brahman suggested by 'neha nānāsti kiñcana', does not mean that Brahman is inactive; it only suggests the freedom of Brahman. The Advaitin would construe this freedom of Brahman as 'freedom-from' and not as 'freedom-to'. But in the Upaniṣads the 'freedom-to' is not only not denied but also positively stated. As to the question of the compatibility of the 'freedom-to' with the 'freedom-from' we have already seen that the former understood in the sense of Kriyā (and not karma) is quite compatible with the latter. (see pp. 6–9). The Upaniṣads do not take a negative and renunciatory view of life; the Upaniṣadic way of life is also a life of richness and fulfilment. As we have already pointed out,[1] Bhukti is compatible with Mukti, and the Upaniṣads do not create dichotomy between enjoyment (bhukti) and liberation (mukti), rather they prescribe a synthesis of the two.[2] One may wonder how the negativistic view of life, which the Advaitin holds, is derived from the Upaniṣads. The point is that the Upaniṣadic Advaita is different from the classical scholastic Advaita, and the Āgamic position is *not* different from the Upaniṣadic Advaita.

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1. See pp. 47 to 50.
2. Īśopaniṣat—9–11.

The Tantric or the Śaiva culture is sometimes ascribed to the Dravidians[1] (who are said to be the original natives of India), the Vedic culture being Aryan. (Aryans are said to have migrated to India). We do not know for certain what is the historical origin of the Tantric or Śaiva culture, nor do we know the anthropological fact about the Dravidians and the Aryans; it is not also necessary to consider it here. If the Dravidians existed as a separate race, and if the Tantric culture originally belonged to them, they were certainly one of the wisest races on earth, for they knew the truth that the inner Nature cannot be eliminated simply by suppressing or rejecting it, and they further discovered the way to win over Nature with the help of Nature itself.

9. Tantric culture is sometimes ascribed to Dravidians.

It seems the Aryans were no less wise, for they quickly and successfully accepted and assimilated within their own fold the essence of the Dravidian culture. And the blending of the two cultures was a happy one, for the two cultural traditions (if at all originally separate) were complementary to each other. However, in the beginning, it seems, the Aryans had contemptuous attitude towards the Tantric (or Śaiva) culture; this is suggested by the condemnation of the Śaivas as phallic worshippers (Śiśna-devāḥ).[2] But,

10. Assimilation of the Dravidian into the Aryan.

1. The theory of the Dravidian origin of Tantrism is probably based on a survey of the ethos of the Tribal people in India, who have a very positive attitude towards life and a very liberal and Tantra-like view of sex. This is specially noticeable in the tribals of Bastar and Surguja. The sexual dormitories (*ghotuls*) of Bastar are famous. As to the question of the Āgamas (or Tantras) having been written after the Vedas, it is believed that the Tantric tradition existed in the form of oral and practical tradition from the pre-historic times, and it was put into writing only very late—a theory that the orthodox Tantrist too believes. But all this is just possibility.
2. Ṛgveda—7/21/5 (मा शिश्नदेवा अपि गुर्ऋतं नः);
Also Ṛgveda—10/99/3 (ध्नञ्छिश्नदेवाँ अपि वर्पसा भूत्).

perhaps later on the Aryans realised that the Śaiva culture had significant elements; and then they quickly grasped and digested the essentials of that culture—which is suggested by the Vedic literature considered as a whole. This historical and anthropological conjecture of ours is, however, only inicidental.

11. The Vedic complemented by the Āgamic gives the complete picture of Indian culture.

Anyway, it would be wrong to say that Indian culture is only Vedic or only Āgamic. True Indian culture is really a fusion or synthesis of the two traditions. Indian practical life has always displayed a synthesis of the two. The entire Indian literature both in Sanskrit and in other native languages provide ample ground to warrant this conclusion. Other forms of Indian art like music, sculpture, etc., too suggest the same. The Āgamic being complementary to the Vedic, the picture of Indian culture becomes complete only when the two traditions are put together; the Vedic becomes complete only when it is complemented by the Āgamic.

PART III
APPENDIX

Appendix 1

1. THE HISTORICAL AND SOME OTHER QUESTIONS REGARDING THE TANTRA.

I—History of the Tantra.

1. The number of the Tantras.

In the orthodox Hindu tradition the Tantras (or Āgamas) enjoy the same status as the Vedas. Like the Vedas, they are believed to be revelation—Lord Śiva has revealed them to His consort, Pārvatī. The Vedas are four in number, but the Tantras are many more. There is difference of opinion regarding the authentic number of the Tantras. Some take twenty eight Āgamas to be authentic, while others accept sixty four. In the *Śaiva Siddhānta* the former position is accepted while in the *Trika* system (Kāśmīra Śaivism) the latter is maintained.[1] Although the number of the Tantras is mentioned as sixty four, only a few are available. Many Tantras mentioned by Abhinavagupta in his *Tantrāloka* are not traceable.[2]

2. The monistic Tantras.

Of the non-dualistic Tantras (which form the original base of Kāśmīra Śaivism) the important ones which are also available may be mentioned. They are—*Mālinīvijaya* or *Mālinīvijayottara* (also called *Śrīpūrvaśāstra*), *Svacchanda*, *Netra*, *Vijñānabhairava*, *Parātriṁśikā* and *Kulārṇava*. Abhinvagupta gives the highest importance to *Mālinīvijaya*[3] on which he has written a

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1. Abhinavagupta has referred to the number in *Tantrāloka* दशाष्टादशवस्वष्टभिन्नं यच्छासनं विभो :............। T. A. 1/18.

2. Mahamahopadhaya Pt. Gopinath Kaviraj has written an extensive bibliography of the Tantric literature, 'तान्त्रिक साहित्य', published by हिन्दी समिति, लखनऊ, 1972. Those interested in the bibliography may see the same.

3. न तदस्तीह यन्न श्रीमालिनीविजयोत्तरे।—T. A. 1/17.

vārtika. He has written a commentary of the *Parātriṁśikā* called '*Vivaraṇa*'. Kṣemarāja has written commentary called '*Udyota*' on some of the Āgamas (*Svacchanda*, *Netra* and *Vijñānabhairava*).

3. History of Kāśmīra Śaivism.

The most prominent interpretation and explanation of the Tantra is to be found in the Kāśmīra Śaivism, and, therefore, a brief account of the literature of this system may also be given The first name in the history of Kāśmīra Śaivism is Vasugupta (8th century A. D.). He is said to have discovered the 'Śivasūtras' which present the gist of the Śaiva-sādhanā based on the non-dualistic philosophy of the Tantra.[1] In his name goes the famous *Spanda-Kārikā* which presents the conception of ***Kriyā*** or *Spanda* (spontaneity) and the way to achieve Freedom through *Spanda*. Then comes Somānanda (9th century) the first systematiser of the Pratyabhijñā school. In his *Śiva-dṛṣṭi* he criticised the grammarian's theory of the creation of the world from ***Śabda*** (word),[2] and established the non-dualism of *Citi* or Consciousness. His disciple Utpaladeva (or Utpalācārya) following the philosophical method gave a more systematic presentation of the Pratyabhijñā philosophy in his *Īśvara-Pratyabhijñā-kārikā*. He also wrote '*Śiva-stotrāvalī*' apart from *Siddhitrayī*.

The most important name in the history of Kāśmīra Saivism is Abhinavagupta (between 10th and 11th century), the grand-disciple of Utpaladeva. He wrote his famous commentary, *Vimarśinī*, (*laghvī* and *bṛhatī*) on the Pratyabhijñā-kārikās. His renowned work, *Tantrāloka*, is a systematic and rational account of the Tantric philosophy and religion. Abhinavagupta synthesised in himself the different sub-trends of Kāśmīra Śaivism and gave a complete picture of the Śaiva thought. He also authored

1. The story goes that in a vivid dream Vasugupta was directed by Lord Śiva to go to a particular hill (Mahādeva giri) and find the Śiva-Śūtras inscribed on a stone slab, and propagate the non-dualistic philosophy of the Tantra. After he woke up, he went to the hill and found the Śiva-sūtras as directed by the Lord.
2. We shall discuss this in '*Śakti* as *Vāk*'.

Tantrasāra besides many other works. His disciple, Kṣemarāja, presented the gist of the system in his very popular *'Pratyabhijñā-hṛdayam'* besides his commentary on the *Spanda-kārikā* (*Spandanirṇaya*). Mahārthamañjarī of Maheśvarānanda (13th century), emphasising the *Kaula* philosophy, is perhaps the last work of the system.

So far as the chronology of the Tantra is concerned nothing can be said with certainty. No theory regarding the time of the Tantra is more than conjecture. The orthodox belief is that the Tantras are not authored by man; they have come from Lord Śiva, and in this sense they are timeless. But to those who look from the historical point of view, the Tantras seem to be post-Vedic. The language of the Tantra is the post-Vedic Sanskrit which was systematised by Pāṇini. Moreover, there is an internal evidence, namely, that in the Tantra itself there is mention of the Veda.[1] All this indicates that the Tantra is post-Vedic, and, therefore, they guess that the time of Tantra roughly ranges from one thousand B. C. to five hundred A. D.

4. The theory that the Tantra is post-Vedic.

There is another theory that the Tantric system originally belonged to the Dravidians (as we have mentioned earlier.)[2]. Dravidians are said to be the original natives of India prior to the advent of the Aryans. They are said to have been worshipping Lord Śiva and following the Tantric ways of life. The Vedas were composed by the Aryans who came later. In other words, the Veda is Aryan and the Tantra is Dravidian. If it is true that the Tantras belonged to the Dravidians and that the Dravidians inhabited India before the advent of Aryans, then the Tantras will have to be dated prior to the Vedas. As to the question that the language of the Tantras is post-Vedic and that there are in the Tantra itself references to the Veda, it may be said that the Tantra existed in the form of oral and practical tradition from the pre-Vedic times, and that it was put into

5 The theory that the Tantra is Dravidian.

1. See Kulārṇava Tantra—2/84-85 and 2/140-41.

2· See page 87.

writing only later (after the Veda). This theory too is not impossible.

Whatever the historical truth might be, it is at least certain that the Tantric culture is very very old. As the Tantra is complementary to the Veda (as we have discussed earlier), it (the Tantra) perhaps existed side by side with the Veda. A study of the ancient Indian culture may reveal the impact of Tantra on Indian life. Therefore, we may hazard the conclusion that the Tantra is at least as old as the Veda.

II—The Tantra is Experiential.

6. Tantra is the record of the experiences of the seers.

Whether the Tantra is authored by man or is revealed by God is a pertinent question to be considered. The external form of the Tantra suggests that it is revealed by Lord Śiva as it is presented in the form of dialogue between Śiva and Pārvatī. It is quite possible to conceive Tantra as revelation; but the speciality of the Tantra is that it is based on experience (as we have seen earlier),[1] and that is why it is called Āgama (or Āgamana—inductive experience). The yogis and seers have experienced the truth. The Tantra may be understood as a record of their experience, the dialogue of Śiva and Pārvatī being a literary device of making the record attractive.

In this connection it may be pointed out that Abhinavagupta interprets the dialogue between Śiva and Pārvatī as a dialogue within our own consciousness—between the two levels of consciousness. He says, "the Self which is present in every form and is self-luminous, does the questioning and answering both itself as if by dividing itself into the questioner and the speaker."[2] It is also said that it is the Lord Śiva (the Self) Himself that, taking the form of the teacher and the pupil, revealed the Tantra by way

1. See pages 20 to 22.

2. स्वात्मा सर्वभावस्वभावः स्वयं प्रकाशमानः स्वात्मानमेव स्वात्माविभिन्नेन प्रश्नप्रतिवचनात् प्रष्टृप्रतिवक्तृस्वात्ममयेन अहंतया चमत्कुर्वन् विमृशति—Parātriṁśikā-vivaraṇa—pp. 14-15

of question and answer.[1] This means that the dialogue between Śiva and Pārvatī is taken to be really a dialogue between the seeking self and the answering self (the answer being provided from within the self). The questioning self is *aṇu* (the lower self) and the answering self is the Śiva (higher Self). The same interpretation may be given in the case of the dialogue between Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa in the Gītā.

7. Interpretation of the dialogue between Śiva and Pārvatī.

Even if the dialogue is understood literally and the Tantra is taken to be revelation, there will be no discrepancy. The Tantra being revealed by God and it being experienced by the yogīs and seers are quite compatible, for what is revealed can also be confirmed in our own experience. The Tantric tradition accepts both together.

III—The problem of Equivocation in Tantra.

8. The question of the difference of ideas in the Tantra.

A question may be asked : if Tantra is taken to be revelation or even if it is taken to be an experienced truth, why is it that there is difference of ideas in the Tantra ? This question is considered in the Tantrāloka. It is true that the Tantra advocates three philosophical positions---bheda (difference), bhedābheda (unity-in-difference) and abheda (unity). Technically, the bheda-Āgama is called Śiva-Āgama, the bhedābheda one is called Rudra-Āgama and the abheda one is called Bhairava-Āgama.[2] Different philosophical positions may ensue from these three differently orientated Āgamas.[3] So, the question is : why this difference ? *Adhikārī-bheda* (difference of competence or suitability) is the answer. In the Indian tradition in general and the Tantric tradition in particular it is maintained that one

1. गुरुशिष्यपदे स्थित्वा स्वयं देव: सदाशिव: ।
पूर्वोत्तरपदैर्वाक्यैस्तन्त्रं समवतारयत् ॥ Ibid—p. 12

2. अतश्च भेद-भेदाभेद-अभेद प्रतिपादकं
शिवरूद्रभैरवाख्यं त्रिधैवेदं शास्त्रमुद्भूतम् । —T. A. (*Viveka*)-p.45

3. Actually this has happened. '*Śaiva-Siddhānta*', has originated from the bheda-Āgamas, 'Vīra Śaivism' from bhedābheda and 'Kāśmīra Śaivism' from abheda.

and the same sādhanā or path may not be suited to all persons, for all are not at the same spiritual level, there is a hierarchy of the stages of spiritual evolution. So, different paths may be prescribed for different *Adhikārī* .

Philosophy here is taken as path or sādhanā; therefore, different philosophies of bheda, bhedābheda and abheda are prescribed for different adhikārīs. There are some people (perhaps the majority) who cannot understand abheda (unity); they can understand bheda (difference) only. Therefore, only bheda-philosophy can help them. But there are some others who cannot remain satisfied with the bheda-philosophy, they need abheda; for them is the abheda-philosophy, and so on.[1] Therefore, the difference in philosophy is not from the side of the Āgama, but it is from the side of the adhikārīs for whom the teaching is meant. The Tantric seer is like an expert physician who does not prescribe one and the same medicine to all the patients; the medicine varies according to the needs of the patients. This is why it happens (and this has often happened in the history of Indian spirituality) that the same *guru* teaches different ideologies to the different disciples. The *guru* knows the full truth, but the truth is grasped by the disciple according to his own understanding.

9. Adhikārī-bheda is the answer.

A further question arises here : even if granted that the three types of philosophies--bheda, bhedābheda and abheda--are

1. The Mādhyamika Buddhist while explaining the difference in philosophical beliefs, holds that everyone temperamentally is a particular philosophical type or clan (*gotra*). We accept a particular philosophy not because it is true, but we accept it because we unconsciously like it or are temperamentally suited to it. It is said about the Buddha that he preached apparently self-conflicting ideas to different persons. He it said to be a physician (*vaidya*) who prescribed divergent medicines of sādhanās according to the needs of the suffering patients of *saṁsāra*.

10. The philosophy of unity is more correct because it is more comprehensive.

meant for three different types of people, all the three should be placed at par, why the *abheda* philosophy is regarded as the highest or *the* correct philosophy ? To this question Jayaratha, the commentator on the *Tantrāloka*, gives an iteresting answer. He says that the philosophy of *abheda* (unity) includes or synthesises within itself the other two, and not *vice-versa*; and so it is the highest or the truest.[1] Unity includes difference; the *bheda* (difference or maniness) is accepted, but it is given its proper place; that is, the *many* is accepted as the free expression of the *one*. Abhinavagupta says that it is the Śiva who first manifests the world of *bheda* as the *pūrvapakṣa* and then again brings it to the *uttarapakṣa* of *abheda* (unity)[2]. It is the *līlā* of the non-dual Lord to freely manifest in duality, denying at the same time the independent status of duality by incorporating it within Himself. Therefore, *abheda* is the highest truth. The logic here is that what is more comprehensive is more true.[3] The father Advaitin, Gauḍapāda, too says, "The dualists being absolutely certain of their own positions, oppose one another, but this (the philosophy of non-dualism) is not opposed to them."[4] The point is that *abheda* or non-dualism being a more comprehensive and syn-

1. T. A. (*Viveka*)-1/18 (p. 45).

2. पूर्वपक्षतया येन विश्वमाभास्य भेदतः ।
अभेदोत्तरपक्षान्तर्नीयते तं स्तुमः शिवम् ॥

—I. P. V. 1/2 (p. 51)

3. Leo Tolstoy in his philosophic and very interesting story, 'The Coffee-house of Surat', presents with the ingenuity of an artist the different warring positions regarding the conception of God, and concludes to show that the more comprehensive the conception of God is, the nearer it is to truth.

4. स्वसिद्धान्तव्यवस्थासु द्वैतिनो निश्चिता दृढम् ।
परस्परं विरुध्यन्ते तैरयं न विरुध्यते ॥

—Māṇḍūkya-kārikā-3/17

thetic philosophy, accepts all positions (of course, giving them their proper place), and, therefore, is the truer philosophy.

IV—The Meaning of Tantra :

11. The meaning of the word 'Tantra.'

It will not be out of place to say a few words on the meaning of the word 'Tantra' and 'Āgama'. The word *Tantra* means a discipline or a system. Since the Tantra is a particular discipline—the Śaiva[1] discipline—it is also called *Śiva-Tantra* or *Śiva-śāsana* (the Śaiva discipline). The layman understands by Tantra as something related with the mystical or the weird, something including *Mantra, Yantra, Cakra*, etc., for invoking uncanny powers and so on. But obviously this is a very naive understanding of the word *Tantra*. *Tantra* means discipline—a logically worked out self-consistent discipline. The discipline is both in the field of philosophy (or metaphysics) and in the field of religion or practical life. In other words, *Tantra* means a philosophical discipline as well as a religious and cultural one.

12. The meaning of the word 'Āgama'.

The word *Āgama* is one with the word *Āgamana* which means induction or inductive experience as against *Nigama* or *Nigamana* which means deduction. Here the word *Āgamana* is used for all experience and not merely sense-experience. Since the Tantra is based on actual experience acquired by yogīs and seers (as we have already mentioned),[2] it is called Āgama.

There is also another meaning of the word *Āgama*. *Āgama* means 'that which comes' or 'that which comes automatically' (*āgacchati iti āgamaḥ*). When the *mala* (spiritual dirt) is removed from the self, knowledge dawns or the intuitive experience automatically 'comes' from within the self itself. The person who attains knowledge in this way (that is, by himself and not by hearing some other *guru*) is called the *Saṁsiddha*, and such a *guru*

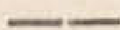
1. Here the word, 'Śaiva' is used to include the 'Śākta' also.

2. See 'Āgama as the Experiential basis of Philosophy'. (pp. 20–22).

is called the *Sāṁsiddhika guru*. Since the Tantra is a record of the intuitive experience of the *Saṁsiddhas*, it is called *Āgama*.

13. The question of the validity of the Tantra.

In the last we will refer to a very important question—the question of the validity of the Tantra. The question is : on what basis should we accept the statements of the Tantra ? Why not regard the Tantra as poetic imagination or subjective speculation of a philosopher or abnormal experience of a psychoneurotic ? Since this important question is related to the epistemology of the Tantra, we will discuss it in the next section, "The Tantric Epistemology'.



Appendix 2

THE TANTRIC EPISTEMOLOGY

1. The Nature of Knowledge :

1. Epistemology co-mingled with ontology.

It is obvious that the axiology (theory of values) of a system is based on its ontology or metaphysics (theory of reality), and the ontology is, in turn, based on the epistemology (theory of knowledge) the system holds. Epistemology, therefore, is the ground or base of philosophy. Though in the history of philosophy it is difficult to find an epistemology perfectly free from ontological pre-suppositions, yet effort can be made (as Kant did) to present the epistemology independently. The same can be done in the case of the Tantric epistemology. It is true that the Tantric theory of knowledge as given in the texts is co-mingled with ontology, and sometimes it becomes difficult, rather impossible, to understand the epistemological position without having the ontological presupposition in mind; yet it is not altogether impossible to extricate the epistemology of the Tantra from its ontology and present it in an independent way.

2. Kowledge is the nature of the self.

We will consider here in brief some selected topics, namely, nature of knowledge, means of knowledge, validity of knowledge and the theory of error. In order to understand the nature of knowledge it is necessary to understand its relation with consciousness or the self. The *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika* system takes knowledge to be an accidental quality of the self. The basis of this contention of *Nyāya* is perhaps its view of sleep; in sleep the self is there and yet there is no process of knowing. The Sāṅkhya, the Vedānta and many other systems hold that knowledge is not a *quality* of the self, much less an *accidental* quality; it is really the very nature of the self or consciousness. The Tantrist joins them in maintaining that knowledge is the nature of the self. The popular analogy given in the context of the knowledge-situation is that of light and illumination. Light and illumination are not

two different things; they are one, for light is nothing but illumination. In other words, illumiation is not the quality (*guṇa*) of light, it is the very nature (*svarūpa*) of light. Similarly, knowledge or knowing understood in the sense of illumination (*prakāśa*) is not a *quality*[1] of the self or consciousness which is like light; it is the *nature* of the self.

3. The objection of *Nyāya*.

As to the objection of the *Naiyāyika*—that if knowledge is the nature of the self, it should be present in the deep sleep also— the Tantrist would answer that in the deep sleep the self or consciousness is covered, and so it does not illumine. When the sun is covered by the clouds in the sky, it is not that the sun is devoid of illumination; what has really happened is that the rays of the sun are obstructed by the clouds. The moment the clouds disperse, the sun again shines. Similarly, during the sleep the consciousness is clouded; and when we wake up—that is, when the obstruction is removed from the consciousness it shines again.

4. The Advaitin's view that knowledge is passivity.

In the context of the nature of knowledge the most significant contribution of the Tantra is the discovery that knowledge (*jñāna*) is also an activity (*kriyā*), though an effortless activity. The Advaitin who stands in sharp contrast to this position, holds that knowledge is a state of passivity. There may well be the states of activity which lead to knowledge, but in the moment of knowledge itself we are passive; the awareness or knowledge of the obiect comes of its own accord, we do not *do* it. Take for example the knowledge of sweetness (say of a fruit). We pick up the fruit, chew it and devour the

1. The substance-quality relationship entails ontological difference between the two. Quality merely *resides* in substance so to say; it is not one with the substance, the substance being one thing, the quality being quite another thing. The sweetness of sugar, for example, is different from sugar itself, sugar is merely the substratum (*ādhāra*) of sweetness. That is why it will be wrong to say that sugar *is* sweetness; the correct expression will be that sugar *has* sweetness. But in the case of light and illumination it is wrong to say that light *has* illumination, the right expression will be that light *is* illumination. This is because illumination is the *nature* of light and not a *quality* of light.

morsel—all this is activity; but so far as the actual awareness of sweetness is concerned, we do not *do* it, it comes of its own accord, we simply *receive* it. The point which the Advaitin wants to emphasise here is that we do not actively bring or make the awareness of sweetness just as we actively put the fruit into the mouth; on *our* part, we are silent in that moment. This is why, the Advaitin further clarifies, that knowledge or *jñāna* is objective (*vastu-tantra*) as opposed to activity or *kriyā* which is subjective (*puruṣa-tantra*). In knowledge we depend upon the object; we cannot *choose* to know the object the way we like. But in activity we can choose—we are free to do it or not to do it or do it otherwise (*kartum akartum anyathā vā kartum......*)[1].

The Tantrist would point out that although the knowledge-situation apparently seems to be a state of passivity or inactiveness, really it is not so. It is a state of passivity only in the sense that there is no voluntary doing or choosing on the part of the knower; but in so far as knowing the object means *'grasping'* or *'catching'* it, it implies a positive and active involvement on the part of the knower. As we have already pointed out[2], knowledge or knowing is a kind of activity, though effortless or automatic. Here we will again refer to the analogy of reflection. The phenomenon of knowledge is generally said to be analogous to reflection—say the reflection of moon in a pond; the mind is said to be like the pond and the reflection of the moon like the image of the object reflected in the mind. It is further believed that just as the pond remains passive and irresponsive when the moon is reflected in it, so also does the mind when the object is reflectd in it. But here the question is : is the knowing of an object just like the reflection of the moon in a pond ? Of course, this analogy has some points common with knowledge (and sometimes the Tantrist himself uses this analogy), but there is a fundamental difference The pond does not actively grasp or catch the moon; the pond has not

5. Knowledge is not just like reflection.

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1. पुरुषेण कर्तुमकर्तुमन्यथा वा कर्तुं शक्यम् पुरुषतन्त्रत्वात् ।
— Śārīraka-bhāṣya 1-1-4

2. See "Jñāna Itself is Kriyā", page 10.

to 'understand' or 'become aware' of the moon, it is simply a case of physical reflection. But in the case of knowledge the mind has to understand or become aware of the object; in knowledge there is a 'grasping' or 'catching', as it were, of the object. This means active involvement on the part of the knower. The pond is not actively involved, but the knower is.

The point is that unless there is 'grasping' or 'catching' (understanding or being aware of) on the part of the knower, it cannot be a case of knowledge; it will be mere sensation, or it will be like the literal reflection of the moon. This means that mind is active in knowing an object. Sensation becomes perception only when consciousness (or the knower) turns itself to the sensation and 'understands' or 'catches' it. If the mind or the attention of the knower is elsewhere, the sensation cannot be 'understood' even if it has entered into the mind. The point is that 'grasping' or being aware of the sensation is a positive involvement or 'flutter' (*spandana*) or activity of the knowing consciousness. But why the phenomenon of knowledge appears to be a state of passivity as the Advaitin points out ? – to this the Tantrist would reply that this is because the activity in the knowledge or knowing is not voluntary but automatic or effortless. We do not voluntarily and effortfully 'grasp' or understand the object; the 'grasping' is effortless or automatic so to say; and since this activity of 'grasping' is effortless or automatic, it may be mistaken not to be there at all. The pond does not become aware of the reflection, but the mind does. Therefore, knowledge is actually 'knowing' which suggests activity; 'knowing' is not a linguistic misnomer.

6. Knowledge is a state of effortless activity.

There is a question : knowledge reveals objects, but how is knowledge itself known ? The *Nyāya* theory is that knowledge is

known just as the table or the chair is known; that is, knowledge is made 'object' of knowing; the only thing is that

7. The Nyāya theory of '*anu-vyavasāya*'.

knowledge is known by an after-knowledge (*anu-vyavasāya*).[1] I know the table—this is knowledge in the first moment. I know that I know the table—this is the after-knowledge in the second moment (*anu-vyavasāya*) which is knowledge of knowledge. The point is that in the first place the *table* is the object of knowledge, but in the second moment the *knowledge* (of the table) itself is the object of knowledge—in the 'after-knowledge' the previous knowledge becomes like the table.[2]

There are two difficulties in this Nyāya theory of *anu-vyavasāya*. First, knowledge cannot be known as an 'object', for knowledge falls on the side of the knower and not on the side of the known; it is part of the knower so to say. Knowing the

8. Criticism of *anuvyavasāya*.

knowledge is the same as knowing the knower. It cannot be made an object, for the knower including the knowing or knowledge always stands as the subject (*jñātā*) prior to the object (*jñeya*). To know the knowing subject as an object (in the subject-object mode of knowledge) is a contradiction-in-terms (*vadatovyāghāta*). The point is that since knowing or knowledge always stands outside the object known, it cannot itself be made an object; if we make itself an object of knowledge, it will cease to be knowledge—the *object* is not knowledge, the *knowing* of that object is knowledge.

Secondly, if knowledge is not revealed or known by itself and it requires an after-knowledge (*anu-vyavasāya*) for revealing itself, then this will involve *infinite regress*. Knowledge is revealed

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1. '*Anu*' means 'after' and '*vyavasāya*' means' 'knowledge'; so '*anu-vyavasāya*' means 'after-knowledge' or 'second knowledge'.
2. The *Nyāya* system of Indian philosophy is a typically complete realism and objectivism. According to it, everything including the knowing subject and its knowledge can be known as object (*sarvaṁ jñeyam*—सर्वं ज्ञेयम्—everything is 'knowable'.) Other systems, however, do not subscribe to this view.

by *anu-vyavasāya*, but this *anu-vyavasāya* itself being knowledge requires a second *anu-vyavasāya*, and the second one will require a third one, and so on *ad infinitum*. The point is that if knowledge is not illumined or known *by itself* in the very first moment of knowing, it cannot be known by after-knowledge. The Nyāya theory of *anuvyavasāya* is obviously naive; it is not tenable.

Knowledge *cannot* be known as an *object*, and still it is a fact that I know my knowledge. This simply means that the mode of knowing the knowledge is a dfferent one—different from the subject-object mode of knowing the table and the chair. This mode is what is called '*svayamprakāśa*'[1] (self-illuminination). Knowledge is revealed or illumined *by itself* in the very first moment of revealing the object. I know the table and at the same time I automatically know that I know the table. Knowledge is like light. Light reveals or illumines the object, and at the same time it also reveals itself in the same process. But the remarkable thing is that light does not reveal itself in the same way as it reveals the table and the chair. It reveals the table by 'falling' on the table (that is, by making the table its object), but in order to reveal itself it does not turn back and 'fall' on itself. In other words, light does not make itself its object and yet illumines itself, it illumines itself 'subjectively' so to say. Light is *svayamprakāśa* (self-illumined). Similarly, knowledge makes itself aware not by making it its object, but it does so in the *svayamprakāśa* (self-illumined) way.

9. Knowledge is self-illumined.

1. In the Advaita-Vedāntic literature the idea of *svayamprakāśa* has been given due consideration with utmost clarity. Citsukhācārya, for example, in his *Tattvapradīpikā* (popularly known as *Citsukhī*) has devoted an important section on the concept of *svayamprakāśa*. In the Tantric tradition, however, the idea of *svayamprakāśa* is just accepted and maintained throughout.

II. The Means of Knowlegde :

10. Consciousness is the real *pramāṇa.*

The systems of Indian philosophy accept several *pramāṇas* (means of valid knowledge), the number ranging from one to ten. *Pratyakṣa* (perception), *Anumāna* (inference) and Śabda (verbal testimony) are the most prominent ones. Tantrism is not particular about the number of the *pramāṇas*, it may accept all of them; but it has a deeper insight in the problem of *pramāṇa*. Tantrism tends to identify the underlying principle of all the *pramāṇas* The Tantric insight is that it is the consciousness that is the foundation or ground of all the *pramāṇas*; consciousness is the underlying principle which gives life to the *pramāṇas*[1]. Consciousness, therefore, is the real pramāṇa or '*the*' pramāṇa[2]. All other pramāṇas are its extension, or they are the means which the consciousness uses for its end.

Let us clarify the point. The question is : what is that which makes the *pramāṇa* itself valid, or in other words, what is that which ascertains the truth of a particular *pramāṇa* ? The answer is consciousness Call it reason or understanding or self - it is this that is the life (*prāṇa*) of every *pramāṇa* After all, how do we know that perception, for example, is a means of valid knowledge ? It is our reason or consciousness that ascertains the truth of perception. Moreover, it is the consciousness which perceives through the means of perception (*pratyakṣa*). Merely the contact of sense-organ with the object does not make *pratyakṣa-pramāṇa*; it is the inner consciousness which knows through the sense-object contact, that makes it *pramāṇa*. And so is the case with

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1. Pramāṇāni pramāveśe svabalākramaṇakramāt,
   Yasya vaktrāvalokīni prameye taṁ stumaḥ śivam.
   प्रमाणानि प्रमावेशे स्वबलाक्रमणक्रमात् ।
   यस्य वक्त्रावलोकीनि प्रमेये तं स्तुमः शिवम् ॥—I. P. V. 12|2 (Intr.).
2. Pramāṇānyapi vastūnāṁ jīvitaṁ yāni tanvate,
   Teṣāmapi paro jīvaḥ sa eva parameśvaraḥ.
   प्रमाणान्यपि वस्तूनां जीवितं यानि तन्वते ।
   तेषामपि परो जीवः स एव परमेश्वरः ॥
   I. P. V. /2/3 (Intr.), p. 60.

other *pramāṇas* also. *Āgama-pramāṇa* which is said to be the real *pramāṇa*, is actually understood in the sense of consciousness—super-consciousness of the yogīs and seers or even of God. It is said, "Āgama is another name given to the linguistic expression of the inner ideation or knowing of God whose nature is consciousness, and this (Āgama) is the life of perception (*pratyakṣa*), etc."[1]

From what is said above it follows that consciousness which is '*the*' pramāṇa, uses other pramāṇas (perception, etc.) as its means. In other words, other pramāṇas are really an extension of consciousness. In perception, for example, consciousness or the self is the knower (*pramātā*). Here it knows through the sense-organs contacting the object. Similarly, in the case of inference (*anumāna*) it is the consciousness which knows through the inferential equipments (*Vyāpti*, etc). Tantrism differs from Sāṅkhya which maintains that it is the *buddhi* (intellect) and not directly the *puruṣa* (the self or consciousness) that knows. The Tantrist would clarify that the *buddhi* or the *indriya* (sense-organ) is merely a means or an apparatus of knowing. The apparatus itself does not see or know. For example, when I know or see the table, it is not the eye—the visual apparatus, or the intellect, the mental apparatus—that sees; it is really I (the self or consiousness) who am seeing. I am seeing *through* the eyes or with the help of eyes. I am hearing through the ears, and so on.

11. Other Pramāṇas are the means of consciousness.

Tantrism emphatically denies the independent status of the intellect or the sense-organs which are simply the means of knowing (or the knowing apparatus). Consciousness or the self uses them in order to know. Thus, *pratyakṣa*, *anumāna*, etc., are the different varieties or extensions of one and the same *pramāṇa* which is consciousness.

An objection may be raised here : If Consciousness or self is the real knower, why is it that sometimes even the not-self appears to be knowing ?—Plants, for example, sometimes seem to act intelligently. The answer is that this is possible because the conscious-

12. The biologist's objection.

1. आगमस्तु नामान्तरः शब्दनरूपो द्रढीयस्तमविमर्शात्मा चित्स्वभावस्य ईश्वरस्य अन्तरङ्ग एव व्यापारः प्रत्यक्षादेरपि जीवितकल्पः । IPV-2/3/2 (p. 80).

ness latent there becomes expressed. The Tantric theory is that consciousness is present everywhere, even in matter, in the latent form. When sometimes for some reason it becomes express or manifest, then the so-called matter also begins to perform conscious activity. But this is strictly because the latent consciousness in matter is now to some extent awakened, or the matter is to some extent made conscious or personified. Here too it is the consciousness (now awakened), and not the matter itself that knows. The Sāṅkhya mistakes the *buddhi*, an evolute of Prakṛti, to be the knower. The *buddhi* does not know; what knows is the self or consciousness (*cit*) *in and through* the buddhi.

13. Consciousness can function independently.

A question may be asked : if sense-organ, etc., are only the means and the consciousness is the real knower, can consciousness function independent of them, or will it have to depend on them always ? The answer is that consciousness can function independently. When as *paśu* it is tainted with *mala* (spiritual dirt) and is confined to and bound by the body, it has to depend upon the sense-organ, etc., for knowledge. When one is confined within the walls of a house, one needs windows to peep out or some apparatus to see the vision of the outside world; but the moment one is free from the confinement of the house, one can see directly without the windows or without any apparatus. Similarly, when the self or consciousness is free from the confinement of the body, it can perceive even without the sense-organs. This is why the disembodied spirits can perceive without sense-organs and function without body. The yogī who acquires a similar position and attains extra-sensory perception by being freed from *mala* to some extent, can also function without the sensory apparatus. Independence of consciousness is proportionate to the freedom from *mala*. Complete freedom from *mala* results in perfect independence as in the case of the *jīvanmukta*. In that state one can still use the physical means freely. This will be like a king who, although capable of riding the state-chariot, adopts foot locomotion out of his freedom.

A further question may be asked : It is the consciousness that knows or proves the object through various *pramāṇas*, but how is

consciousness itself known or proved ? The answer is that consciousness is self-illumined and, therefore, self-proved. We have already tried to show that knowledge is self-illumined (*svayamprakāśa*); the same is true about consciousness also. Knowledge and consciousness (or self)—both[1] are self-illumined. It is the consciousness which illumines or proves the other means of proving, it itself cannot be illumined by the other means.

14. Consciousness is self-proved.

'The pitcher (*ghaṭa*) is illumined by the sun, how can the pitcher illumine the sun ? Consciousness or self (which is called Śiva) illumines the *upāyas* (means), it cannot itself be illumined by them.'[2]

That which is the ground of all, cannot itself be grounded upon something else; it must be self-grounded. Logic demands that unless consciousness is self-illumined, it cannot illumine other things. Experience too reveals that consciousness is self-illumined.

In the very second verse of the *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-kārikā* Utpaladeva summarises the argument that the self or consciousness is self-proved.[3] The self is the doer (*kartā*) and the knower (*jnātā*). The activities of doing and knowing are obvious, they do not require any proof. The doing presupposes the doer and the knowing presupposes the knower. There can be

15. The logical argument.

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1. Consciousness and Knowledge are substantially one. They are *two* only connotatively; denotatively the two are *one* and the same. Knowledge may be understood as the natural and essential function of consciousness just as illumination is the natural function of light (light and illumination essentially being one.).
2. Upāyajālairna śivaḥ prakāśate
ghaṭena kiṁ bhāti sahasradīdhitiḥ ?
उपायजालैर्न शिवः प्रकाशते
घटेन किं भाति सहस्रदीधितिः ?
3. Kartari jñātari svātmanyādisiddhe maheśvare,
Ajaḍātmā niṣedhaṁ vā siddhim vā vidadhīta kaḥ.
कर्तरि ज्ञातरि स्वात्मन्यादिसिद्धे महेश्वरे ।
अजडात्मा निषेधं वा सिद्धिं वा विदधीत कः ॥—I P V /1/1/2

no doing without the doer, no knowing without the knower. The self is logically presupposed or entailed in all doings and knowings.

The self is already present in all denials (*niṣedha*) and assertions (*siddhi*). When I deny or assert anything, I am already present as the denier or the asserter. Who wil ldeny or assert the self (*niṣedhaṁ vā siddhiṁ vā vidadhīta kaḥ*) ? , for the very denier or the asserter is the self. Even if I deny the self and say, 'I am not', this statement itself proves that I am. Therefore, the self is what is called the '*ādi-siddha*'[2] (that which exists prior to everything, or that which exists in the very beginning). *I am* before anything is. The point is that I am the logical presupposition or the epistemological ground of everything.

Here it should be made clear that we should not think that the self is not directly experienced and is only known by logical presupposition. The truth is that the self is also directly known. I directly experience myself, as the self is self-illumined (*svayam-prakāśa*). The point is that the self is also proved logically. or in other words, what is proved by logic is also confirmed by experience. Logic and experience both reveal the self.

16. The argument in other systems.

That the self or consciousness is self-illumined and therefore self-proved is the basic insight of all the systems of Indian philosophy who accept the self. All of them advance more or less the same argument. The Sāṅkhya, for example, proves the existence of *puruṣa* (self) by the argument that it (the self) is the ground (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of all the mental activities and of all the behaviour (*adhiṣṭhānāt*)[3]. The Jaina and the Śaiva-Siddhānta while criticising the no-soul theorist (*Nairātmyavādin*) retort that the very statement of the *Nairātmyavādin* that the 'self is not' proves that the self *is*, as the self is already implied in this denial itself. The Advaitins present the argument perhaps in the clearest and the most sustained way. It is obvious that the world is illumined or known. Now, this fact of the world being known entails the existence of a knowing consciousness. If there is no consciousness,

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
3. Sāṅkhya-kārikā—17.

how can the world be known? In the absence of the knowing consciousness the world will become 'dark' (*jagadāndhya*), and so the self will have to be accepted on this account (*jagadāndhyaprasaṅgāt*)[1]. Even when one denies the self, one really proves its existence, for the self is the very denier himself (*ya eva nirākartā tasyaivātmatvāt*)[2].

In the western philosophy Descartes is the champion advocate of this argument. He starts with *doubting* and then it becomes clear to him that what is 'doubted' may be true or false, but the fact of doubting is quite obvious, and, therefore, the '*doubting*' itself cannot be doubted. He further notices that doubting presupposes a *doubter*—there can be no doubting without a doubter. What is true in the case of doubting is true in the case of thinking in general; and, therefore, Descartes shifts the argument from 'doubting' to 'thinking' and concludes that 'I think, therefore, I am' (*cogito ergo sum*). It may also become clear from the Cartesian treatment of the knowledge of the self that Descartes accepts the existence of the self not merely on the basis of this logical demand, but he maintains that he is also directly aware of himself; the 'doubting' or 'thinking' is a pointer to the self or a helper in turning his attention to the self.

17. The Cartesian argument.

That it is only the epistemological self and not the ontological self that is proved by *svayamprakāśa* and the above argument, and that in the Tantrism the ontological nature of the self is accepted on the basis of the *Āgama-pramāṇa*—will be discussed at the end of this chapter.

So far as the knowing capacity (which is natural to consciousness) is concerned, we may broadly divide consciousness into two levels or stages—the ordinary and the extraordinary. The ordinary level is the stage of the *paśu* (the bound self). Here consciousness is tainted or covered with *mala* (impurity), and, therefore, knowledge at this stage is limited. This is the level of our

18. The two stages of consciousness.

1. अवश्यं चिदात्मा अपरोक्षोऽभ्युपेतव्य : तदप्रथायां सर्वस्याप्रथनेन जगदान्ध्यप्रसङ्गात् ।—'*Bhāmatī*'. S. S. S. Sastri; T P H, Madras, 1933; *adhyāsa-bhāṣya*, p—42.

2. य एव निराकर्ता तस्यैवात्मत्वात्—Śārīraka-bhāṣya 1/1/4.

ordinary knowledge where we use the empirical *pramāṇas* (perception, inference, etc.). The extraordinary level is the stage of the freed consciousness. Here one need not use the empirical pramāṇas, as consciousness at this level, being freed from impurity (*mala*), is independent of the physical or empirical means of knowledge. This is the stage of the *Āgama*-knowledge which is direct or intuitive. We may mention again that *Āgama* is another name for the deeper inner intuitive experience of the seer who has risen to the higher level of Śiva-consciousness [1] .

19. Āgama-knowledge is basic in Tantrism.

The Tantrist does not have much to say about the empirical *pramāṇa* like perception and inference, as he is not interested in the ordinary knowledge so much as he is interested in the Āgama-knowledge. It is the *Āgama*-knowledge that reveals reality. The Tantrist, therefore, endeavours more to deal with the *Āgama-pramāṇa* rather than *pratyakṣa*, *anumāna*, etc. So we will direct our attention to the Ā*gama*. It should be made clear in the very beginning that Ā*gama* is not merely the scripture or the text; it is the record of higher experience. Ā*gama* primarily means the knowledge or experience of the consciousness (or self) at the extraordinary intuitive level. We have already mentioned (page 94) that Abhinavagupta interprets the dialogue between Śaṅkara and Pārvatī (which forms the text of the Āgama) to be the inner dialogue within our own consciousness. Āgama is really a particular level of knowledge or consciousness.

Even if the Āgama is taken as revelation, it makes no difference, for in the Indian tradition the revelation and the higher experience are one and the same. The Indian conception of revelation is different from the Semitic one. In the Semitic religions like Christianity and Islam revelation is understood in the sense of the message or knowledge given by God to man through his prophets; man cannot have it by his own effort or *sādhanā*, it is wholly a prerogative of God. In the Indian tradition, however, revelation is taken to be the message or knowledge of one's own Higher Self, which can be acquired by one's own *sādhanā*.

1. IPV- 2/3/2 (p. 80).

20. Revelation and experience are one.

God being the Higher Self of man, revelation is the voice of one's own Self. This is why it is natural for Abhinavagupta to interpret the Āgamic dialogue of Śaṅkara and Pārvatī as a dialogue of the Higher and the lower selves within our own consciousness[1].

Revelation in the Semitic tradition is, more or less, a one way affair—God reveals the truth to man; man cannot verify it, he has to accept it on faith. But in the Indian conception of revelation there is a promise that it can be verified in actual experience by anyone who follows the required path. The aspirant by perfecting his sādhanā can know it for himself; it will no longer remain an object of faith for him.

The consciousness of the yogin rises to the level of Śiva or Brahman and is one with it. It is at *this* stage that the seer acquires the knowledge which is called revelation. He knows Brahman by *being* Brahman (*brahma veda, brahmaiva bhavati*). Anyone rising to this level can have the revelatory knowledge, as this knowledge is the nature of one's *real* self. Therefore, it is perfectly all right to use revelation and the *'higher experience'* as synonyms. Indian tradition in general and Tantrism in particular uses the two synonymously. The truth is that it is revelation and experience both at once. It is revelation because it is spontaneously revealed in the higher state of consciousness, it is a communication of the Higher Self to the lower one. And it is experience obviously because it is actually experienced by man within his own Self, and not transmitted to him from a different transcendent God.

We generally stand at the ordinary level of knowledge (paśu-knowledge) using the empirical means of knowledge. Western epistemologists (specially Hume and Kant) have successfully tried to show that our knowledge is confined to the realm of sense-experience. Any existence beyond sense-experience is doubtful (Hume); the *reality* or the *thing-in-itself* is unknowable (Kant).[2] Any attempt to go beyond the sense-experience will be either speculation or faith; it will not be knowledge.

21. The Humian-Kantian insight.

1. Parātriṁśikā-vivaraṇa (p.14-15).

2. Here understanding of the Kantian position is based on the *'Critique of Pure Reason'*, and not on the *'Critique of Practical Reason'*.

The obvious conclusion of the discovery made by Hume and Kant is that philosophy should not entertain any speculation about *reality*. However, the speculative idealism of Fichte and Schelling arose immediately after Kant and culminated in Hegel, but soon there was a sharp reaction against Hegelian speculation, and there was a coming back to Hume and Kant. The basic Humian-Kantian insight, namely, that we cannot go beyond sense-experience and know the metaphysical reality, was appreciated. This gave rise to several systems of philosophical thinking—each one starting from the same premise (that is, the Humian-Kantian insight), but moving in different directions and drawing different conclusions. Logical positivism, for example, rejected metaphysics as 'meaningless' (as the metaphysical statements cannot be verified) and accepted science which alone is accessible to our sense-experience. Phenomenology (Husserl) restricted the philosophical enquiry to the phenomenon available, namely, the knowing consciousness and what is given in experience. Existentialism-Humanism too rejected the ontological speculation about the essence of man and his world as 'inauthentic' and concentrated upon the actual living existence of man. The starting point of all these movements is the aforesaid Humian-Kantian discovery. The point is that the Humian-Kantian position stands as the basic insight of the western epistemology today.

This basic insight of the western epistemology is already accepted and appreciated in Indian philosophy in general and Tantrism in particular. Since the very Upaniṣadic-Tantric era it has been clear to the Indian mind that our ordinary knowledge does not acceed to the realm of *Reality*; it is confined to the phenomenal world of sense-experience, technically called *Saṁvṛti* (in Buddhism) or *Vyavahāra* (in Advaita-Vedānta) or *Ābhāsa* (in Tantrism). The Tantrist already fully appreciates the Humian-Kantian idea and wholly agrees to it; but Tantrism as a typical oriental system does not close up with sense-experience.

22. Tantrism claims a higher way of knowing.

It moves a step forward and claims that there is a higher way of knowing—higher than the sense-experience—which reveals *reality*. Behind this claim there is a very strong Indian tradition of higher knowledge, which bears the promise of verification.

23. The Tantric conception of metaphysics is different from the western one.

In the Indian Tradition the conception of 'metaphysics' is basically different from the western one. In the west metaphysics is mainly speculative, and, therefore, subject to the contemporary criticism that it is 'meaningless' or that it is 'inauthentic' or that it is not scientific. In the Indian tradition, specially in Tantrism, however, metaphysics is not speculation; it is really experience (*anubhava*) acquired by higher induction (*āgamana*). In this sense it is worthy of being called 'science' (*vijñāna*); and, therefore, it is neither 'meaningless' nor 'inauthentic'.

The empiricist is all right in accepting the sense-experience, but why should we rule out the very possibility of a way of knowing other than the sensory one ? Is it not an epistemological dogmatism to say that sense-experience is the *only* knowledge, and, therefore, the empirical science is the *only* meaningful study ? Why should we close our eyes to the alleged existence of the phenomena of the higher yogic experience ? If the empiricist-positivist warns that the alleged phenomena of higher experience are doubtful and that we should take proper care and make legitimate investigation before accepting such a claim—the Tantrist will have no objection. But to completely shut one's eyes to such a claim and say that this is not at all possible, is nothing short of rigid dogmatism.

We venture the proposition that the Āgamic knowledge is a science as it is based on the scientific method, and has the promise of being verified. Let us first see what do we mean by science and whether it is legitimate on our part to use the word in that sense. Generally speaking, there are two essential features of science, which must be present in any enquiry that claims to be scientific. First, science is based not on imagination nor on faith, but on experience; and since we ordinarily have sense-experience as the only mode of experience, scientific enquiry is confined to the realm of sense-experience. But the question here

24. The Āgamic knowledge is scientific.

is whether the emphasis of scientific enquiry is on experience in general or on sense-experience in particular. We think, the emphasis must be on experience in general. Science is confined to sense-experience not because it is bound to be so by definition (it is not), but because it knows no other mode of experience. And if some other mode of

experience is found to be there, there should be no objection from the side of science in including it within its (science) realm. The burden then would be not of showing that it is scientific, but of showing that there really *is* such experience.

The other feature of science, which is related to the first, is the objectivity of experience. We call the knowledge of the table scientific, because the table can be cognised objectively. Here again it should be made clear that objectivity does not mean externality of experience; externality is there due to sense-organs, it is not there in the nature of objectivity itself. The psychological experience of emotions and ideas is essentially internal, but the objectivity of the same cannot be denied since we can experience the same within ourselves. Objectivity would only mean that I should have *true* experience, that is, there should be no illusory content in my experience. It is immaterial whether I have the *true* experience from within or from without.

If we accept the above-stated meaning of science, we are led to revise the meaning of verification. What is called verification in science need not be confined to sense-experience. The testing of truth in any kind of objective experience would be worthy of being called by the name of verification.

25. The Āgamic knowledge is inductive.

In this context it is significant to note that the Tantra is called '*Āgama*' or '*Āgamana*'. '*Āgamana*' literally means induction. Since the Tantra is based on inductive experience, it is rightly called *Āgama*; and that is why Abhinavagupta calls it the 'School of Experience' (*Anubhava-sampradāya*).[1] In the Indian tradition 'Induction' is not used merely in the sense of sensory experience, it really connotes all experience in general. The meaning of Induction like that of Science as we have shown above, should not be confined to sense-experience. Induction has a wider connotation including the *yogic* experience of the seers within its realm.

What is said in the Upaniṣads and in the Āgamas is actually the words of those seers who had experienced the Truth; the truth of Śruti or Āgama is finally based on the inductive *yogic* experience.

1. PTV -p. 161

Just as my geography teacher tells me that there are the Rocky Mountains in the North America, describing to me the detailed topography of the region, and I know that the truth of the words of my teacher is finally based on the experience of those surveyors who have actually visited the region of the Rocky Mountains; so also the truth of the Āgamic statements is finally based on the findings of the seers and the yogīs. We do not deny that the Āgama is the word of God, it may very well be the word of God; what we mean is that it is also the word of the men of realisation describing their actual experience.

26. The *yogic* science.

The Āgamic experience is worthy of being called *scientific* for the simple reason that it is true experience and that we can have it even now. This true objective experience was had by saints and seers of past and it has continued to be so down the ages. Indians long ago acquired this experience and applied it to the problems of life. They widely experimented upon its application to the different areas of life; and thus they developed a science of such experiences. The means or method of acquiring this experience was called *Yoga*. There are various forms of *Yoga* both theistic and non-theistic, but in essence the *Yoga* is independent of theistic beliefs, as it is based on practical experience and not on faith. And in this sense the Yogic approach is perfectly rational. We can call it the '*Yogic Science*'. The knowledge of this science was handed over from *guru* to disciple through personal contact. It was also recorded in the books on Yoga and allied subjects, but unfortunately most of the records are lost as they were meant for the esoteric use and not for wide publication.

We may not be able to historically point out what persons acquired that experience when and where, but we can certainly point to a *tradition* of such experience. The difficulty of tracing the individual histories might be due to the reason that Indians did not follow the formal precise method of the systematic scientific enquiry of today. They were quite informal and did not have the modern facilities of record and preservation. Moreover, they did not believe in the historicity of the individual attainments. The individuality of a particular man did not matter

much; what was important was the truth that expressed itself through different individuals.

The statements of the Āgama or of the *Śruti* (Upaniṣad) may not be accepted merely on faith; they may well be verified in actual experience. For the working knowledge in the beginning we may have them on faith, but the end is to experience them for ourselves. In the Upaniṣadic tradition also the *śruti* or *sravaṇa* (hearing from the teacher) is only the beginning.

27. The Āgamic statements can be verified.

The next step is *mati* or *manana* (contemplation or pondering over the teaching), and finally there is *nididhyāsana* (meditation or the process of realisation) which leads to *anubhūti* (experience). *Śruti* is strengthened by *mati* and finally confirmed by *anubhūti*.

An analogy may be of some help in understanding the idea of the verification of the Āgamic truth. Suppose I am in India and have never been to America. There are some people who claim to have been to America and they have given the description of that land. There is an available record about America, based on the description given by the persons visiting that country. If I want to know about America, I will have to consult the record. In the beginning I will have to rely upon it on faith. If I wish to verify the truth of the record, I can very well do so. Of course, I will have to fulfil the pre-requisites—I will acquire the necessary passport and visa, collect money, book the passage and finally take the journey to America; and then I can see the wonderful country with my own eyes. What was *śabdajñāna* (verbal testimony) in the beginning, now becomes first hand knowledge (anubhūti).

Similarly, we can verify the truth of the Āgamic record. Of course, we will have to satisfy the necessary pre-requisites.

28. Verification has pre-requisites.

We will have to do *sādhanā*, purify the consciousness of *mala* (impurity), and then alone we can attain the intuitive *Āgamic* state of consciousnes and 'see' the truth with our own eyes. If some one asks in the very beginnnig (before fulfilling the pre-requisites), "show me the truth", it will be a childish demand. This will be like a child demanding, "show

me America", just after hearing the descriptive account of America.

Even in science verification has its own pre-requisites. We cannot see the scientific truth with bare eyes; we will have to take the help of scientific equipments. Moreover, a naive layman cannot successfully verify the scientific statements; he will have to undergo scientific training (to some extent at least), and then alone he will be able to verify Similarly, the Āgamic truth cannot be verified without undergoing the *sādhanā* necessary for the unfolding of the higher consciousness. If the empiricist -positivist demands that the Āgamic truth should be accessible to the ordinary untrained and impure consciousness that we normally are, he is asking too much. And if *on that account* he rejects the Āgamic claim as mere speculation, his attitude is dogmatic, illogical and unscientific. The attitude of a true scientist will not be that the Āgamic claim is sheer nonsense, the attitude will be that this *may* be true. The true scientist may have the attitude of doubt, not the attitude of rejection.

29. Why Indian philosophy is based on the scripture.

It is relevant here to refer to a particular criticism of Indian philosophy given by some of the occident scholars, that Indian philosophy is based on the scriptures—it starts with the *Śruti* or the *Āgama*; and in this sense it is dogmatic. In answer to this we will say that Indian philosophy is based on the scripture for two reasons. First, the Indian philosophers knew perhaps from the very beginning that reality or the ontological truth is inaccessible to our ordinary knowledge—a truism which Hume and Kant pointed out as late as in the 18th century. If reality is beyond our reach and if we still want to have a picture of reality, then we will have to take resort in *Śruti* or *Āgama*. If I cannot go to America and still I want to know about America, I will have to rely on the description given by persons who have visited America. Similarly, the words of those who are believed to have acquired higher knowledge and known reality, are our only resort if we want to have a picture of reality; otherwise all our thinking about reality will be mere speculation or conjecture.

Secondly, resort to Śruti or to Āgama is not mere faith, as the Śruti and the *Āgama* are taken to be records of the seers. Moreover, there is a promise there that the same can be verified in our actual experience; and there is a tradition of *yogīs* and *siddhas* verifying the same in their lives. Knowing that reason or ordinary understanding cannot know reality and that there is a tradition of higher experience called Śruti or Āgama, it is natural for the Indian philosopher to make Śruti or *Āgama* the basis of philosophy.

Let us consider certain objections which challange the objectivity of the higher experience. We will take the questions one by one. It may be questioned (and the *Cārvāka* does question) that the entire story of higher experience is a big fraud : and because so many people are involved in it in an organised way, it is a case of mass-deception.[1] In answer to this, we will refer to the internal and external evidence of its objectivity and authenticity. The internal evidence is that there is self-contrad-

30. the objection of the *Cārvāka*.

1. The Cārvākas have floated an interesting and humourous story which illustrates their point very well. The story goes that there was a notorious cheat, and the king of the country got the cheat's nose cut in punishment. The cheat left the country and went to a far off place where nobody knew him. There he sat at a public place pretending to enjoy supernatural bliss as if in *samādhi*. He told the people gathered around him out of curiosity, that he was enjoying supernal bliss. Asked if they also could get the bliss, he readily replied, "O yes, provided you get your nose cut." Nobody in the beginning was prepared to take the risk, but at last someone ventured to do the experiment and got his nose cut. He did not have any bliss and complained to the professed master. The cheat told him privately. "Yes, I know that no bliss can he had by getting one's nose cut; but now as your nose is already cut, please say that you are enjoying the bliss." There was no option before the embarrassed man and he obeyed. In this way a whole race of the nose-cuts came out. The story is meant to illustrate the point that the alleged phenomenon of higher experience is an invention of the crooks, and the whole affair is a case of mass-cheating.

iction in having had the Self-realisation on the one hand and deceiving others on the other hand. The psychology of cheating demands that there should be others whom I consider different from me. I can cheat only those whom I consider not to be my own. But the man of Self-realisation feels everybody to be his own, he is all love for everyone; whom would he cheat then ? It would be a case of self-cheating which is meaningless. Moreover, the realised person has no personal desires to get fulfilled, and so, no motive of cheating others can find place in him. If I have no selfish desires, what is the occasion for me to cheat others ?

The external evidence can be found in the actual lives of the men of Self-realisation. The lives of the Buddha and the Christ and so on exemplify the truth of self-less love. Even those who are on the way of Self-realisation, exemplify the same truth. Such persons can be found in all times and at all places though not in plenty. Their actual behaviour can guarantee that there is no cheating involved. The sublimity of their character, the inner calm of their mind, and the deep sense of self-satisfaction and all-fulfilment they possess, show that they must have had that experience. Moreover, had they been cheats, they must also have been exposed.

Hence, the story of Self-realisation is not a fraud. Of course, we cannot give logical guarantee of the same. It is logically possible that the whole thing is fake; but then it is equally possible that it is all true. If it cannot be proved, it cannot either be disproved. The point is that the possibility of such a theory cannot be ruled out.

It is true that there are impostors and pseudo-Tantrists who pretend to have got higher experience and cheat others. It is such persons who arouse suspicion about the higher experience. Such persons have always been there and they can be found even now. But the point is that the presence of impostors does not disprove the truth of the higher experience. Their presence simply means that some false cases also prosper in the name of truth.

Moreover, the Āgamist would say, "Come and test by yourself; in testing no risk like nose-cutting is involved."[1] It is true that the Āgamic claim can be finally proved or disproved only by testing it. It is open to test; if one has doubts, let one test it. The test does not involve risk, for what is required is the moral and spiritual purification which is even otherwise desirable. There is a tradition of spiritual seekers having tested and subsequently confirmed it. It is true that those who reject it, have never tested it—they reject without duly verifying it; in fact they are already inclined to reject it. But those who have tested it, have confirmed it. The sincere seekers who really follow the path, find truth in the Āgamic claim.

31. The Āgamic claim is open to test.

The other objection may be put from the psychologist's or the psycho-analyst's side. The psychoanalyst may point out that the so-called higher experience or self-realisation may not be a case of *consciously* deceiving others, but it may well be a case of unconscious self-deception. The so-called man of Self-realisation may be a paranoid or hysterical personality, and what is called higher experience may be an abnormal or hysterical mood of his mind and he may be under a permanent illusion of having had higher experience. To put the question in simple terms: what is the guarantee that the so-called higher experience is not a case of illusion? In answer to this we may point out two things. First, the higher experience or Self-realisation brings with itself its own clarity and guarantee. It is not against reason; in fact, it is higher reason. Our rational knowledge or what is given in our consciousness does not require any proof, for it is self-illumined or self-proved. The Āgamic experience is all the more reliable, for it is the clearer expression of consciousness. Our ordinary reason in which we place our reliance, is but a partial

32. The objection of the psycho-analyst.

1. The religion of Lord Buddha too is said to be 'Come (*ehi*—एहि) and see (*paśya*—पश्य)' religion. Lord Buddha used to say that his words should be accepted only after duly verifying them and not simply because they were uttered by a master. parīkṣya bhikṣavo grāhyaṁ madvacaḥ na tu gauravāt.

expression of the higher consciousness. Secondly, in Self-realisation there is no possibility of illusion, as it is the realisation not of object but of the subject itself. In the case of an illusion or of a dream what is false is the dream-object and not the dreamer himself.[1] The dreamer (subject) is true even after the dream is cancelled. So, the subject-consciousness is never false (na hi draṣṭurdṛṣṭeḥ viparilopo vidyate). The higher experience is just the experience of the Self or the Subject (Ātman) ; and so there is no question of its being false. What is experienced as an object, say as a perceptible form of some Deity, may be false. It is stated in the Upaniṣads that what is apprehended as object of thought or perceived as object of the senses is not Brahman; Brahman is that Subject by whose light mind and sense-organs function.[2]

We do not mean that the logical possibility of the higher experience being an abnormality is ruled out; what we mean is that the possibility of its being a genuine and healthy experience is very much there. The Āgamist would say that the higher experience is a sign of mental health and not of mental abnormality. In fact, 'svastha (स्वस्थ),' the Sanskrit term for the 'healthy one', means one who is established in the Self (svasmin sthitaḥ—स्वमिन् स्थित:). Of course, it is true that there are abnormal persons suffering from psychoneuroses, who claim to have got the higher experience. Such persons are certainly labouring under illusion. But again the presence of such abnormal persons does not falsify the truth of the genuine experience. The esoteric Āgamic experience should not be confused with the abnormal consciousness of the psycho-neurotic.

The esoteric experience must also be distinguished from the abnormal experience aroused by drugs. Drugs may excite the

1. भ्रान्तिबोधस्य स्वसंवेदनांशे प्रकाशमाने न भ्रान्तिता, तत्र वैपरीत्याभावात्; यस्तु तत्र अध्यवसीयते स्वाकार: स विपरीततया अस्वाकारत्वेन अर्थतया,—इति तत्र अंशे भ्रान्तिता ।—IPV-1/3/5 (p 102).

2. Kenopaniṣat—1/4-8.

nerves, and this may result in abnormal ideations and hallucinations. Moreover, such an experience is transitory; it lasts so long as the effect of the drug is there. The esoteric Āgamic experience, on the contrary, results from a permanent state of consciousness, free from hallucinations and illusory ideations. The most significant characteristic of the Āgamic experience is the absolute clarity of the experience. In the drug-aroused consciousness one may be confused, but in the higher experience one is perfectly clear. The drug-experience is largely akin to dreams, but the Āgamic experience is like that in the waking state.

33. Difference from the experience caused by drugs.

There may be another question regarding the variety of the forms of expression of the higher experience. One may for example ask : why do we find different and sometimes mutually conflicting versions of the so-called higher experience ? Does it not suggest the lack of objectivity therein ? In answer to this we may say that the differences are there, but there is valid explanation for the same. The man who has got the higher experience has gone to the stage of that experience through a particular language and culture which he still belongs to. It is natural, therefore, that his expression is coloured by that particular language and culture; and because languages and cultures vary, the expression of higher experience varies—not in its esoteric meaning but in exoteric form. Secondly, one seer may be emphasizing one aspect of the experience while the other seer may be emphasizing another aspect of the same experience, the need of emphasis arising out of the demand of the particular time and place to which he belongs. Thirdly, he may be speaking differently according to the needs of the hearers of different level. The same truth can be expressed in different and sometimes apparently conflicting ways in order to suit the mental capability of the persons of different levels. This is what is called '*adhikārībheda*'. We have already mentioned this (page 95) and have pointed out that there has been a very strong consideration of the *adnikārī-bheda* in the Indian tradition. Fourthly, there may be statements in the Āgama which are not self-contradictory, but

34. The problem of equivocation.

we may take them to be so on account of our misunderstanding and misinterpreting them. There may be—and in fact there *is*—a lot of misinterpretation, conscious and unconscious, on the part of the philosophers and the scholars.

III. THE VALIDITY OF KNOWLEDGE :

35. *Paratahprā-mānyavāda.*

Validity (*prāmāṇya*) of knowledge is a much disputed topic in the Indian philosophy. Some systems hold that knowledge is validated or invalidated by the external sources; they believe in the extrinsic validity of knowledge (*parataḥ prāmāṇya*). Others believe in the intrinsic validity (*svataḥ prāmāṇya*) ; they hold that knowledge by itself is valid (*svataḥ pramāṇam*), it is invalidated by some external knowledge. The Tantric systems (especially Kāśmīra Śaivism) advocate the theory of the intrinsic validity of knowledge (*svataḥ-prāmāṇyavāda*). The *Naiyāyika* is the champion advocate of the theory of extrinsic validity (*parataḥprāmāṇy-avāda*). His contention is that knowledge by itself is neutral—it is neither true nor false; it is proved to be true or false by another knowledge—the knowledge of what is called '*saṁvādi-pravṛtti*' or '*arthakriyā-kāritva*' (pragmatic value). Take for example the knowledge of the chair. When at first I cognise the chair, this knowledge (namely, 'this is a chair') is neither true nor false. Then in order to ascertain its validity I put the chair to the pragmatic test—I go and sit in the chair. If the chair holds me, it means the chair works, or, in technical terms, the chair has '*arthakriyā*' or '*saṁvādipravṛtti*'—the chair has passed the pragmatic test. This means the chair is real, and subseqently the knowledge of the chair is valid.

36. The pragmatic test of truth.

In the case of a mirage (*mṛgatṛṣṇā*), however, at first I see water-waves floating above a sandy desert in the summar season. When I go to test this knowledge (of water-waves), the apparent water-waves do not satisfy the prəgmatic test—they do not give the touch of water, nor do they quench the thirst. In other words, they have no *arthakriyā*, and, therefore, they are illusory. Hence the knowledge of the water-waves is not valid—it is an illusion.

The *parataḥprāmāṇyavādin* is a realist, and according to the realist, *arthakriyā* is the test of the reality of a thing. The realist's logic is that if a thing has *arthakriyā*, it is possible only when the thing is real; an illusory thing cannot have *arthakriyā*. If the chair is illusory, it cannot hold me; I will fall down when I try to sit in it, just as the mirage-water does not quench my thirst. If the thing is real, the knowledge of that thing is valid (*yathārtha* or *prāmāṇika*) ; if not so, the knowledge is otherwise (*ayathārtha* or *aprāmāṇika*).

Thus, according to the *parataḥprāmāṇyavādin*, knowledge of a thing is proved to be true or false by a second knowledge which tests the *arthakriyā* of that thing. This knowledge of *arthakriyā* s external to the original knowledge in question, and, therefore, validity of a knowledge comes from outside.

The *svataḥprāmāṇyavādin* (the Tantrist is a *svataḥprāmāṇyavādin*) does not accept the above theory. In criticism of the above theory two things may be pointed out.

37. *Parataḥprāmāṇyavāda* involves *infinite regress.*

First, it involves the fallacy of *infinite regress*. If knowledge by itself is neutral and it has to be validated by an external knowledge, then the external knowledge which itself is neutral by virtue of being knowledge, requires a third knowledge in order to be validated ; the third knowledge requires a fourth one, and so on *ad infinitum*. Knowledge cannot at all be validated in this way. This means that there is an inner self-contradiction in the theory of extrinsic validity of knowledge. If a knowledge is not valid in itself, it cannot be validated by any amount of external knowledge.

38. *Arthakriyā* is not the test of truth.

Secondly, the idealist Tantrist (Kāśmīra Śaivism is an idealism) would point out that pragmatic reality (*arthakriyākāritva*) on which the realist puts so much reliance, is not the test of truth. An analysis of the cases of illusion may easily reveal that the illusory objects too have *arthakriyā*. The very meaning of illusion is that it is unreal and yet it is *arthakriyākārī* (having pragmatic reality, or appearing as real). If it does not *appear as real* (in other words, if it is not *arthakriyākārī*), it is not

illusion at all; it is mere nothing (*asat*). An illusory object owns the same amount of *arthakriyā* which a real thing has. The dream experience, for example, although being illusory, has hundred per cent *arthakriyā*—the dream-world appears to be fully real. If I 'see' a chair in a dream, and sit in it in order to test its *arthakriyā*, will it not hold me ? The dream-chair will certainly pass the entire pragmatic test

39. Arthakriyā is just another appearance.

The realist perhaps thinks that the first knowledge which he regards as neutral, is of one order and the second knowledge which tests the truth of the first one, is of another order having more strength. But this is, the idealist would point out, a sheer misunderstanding; in fact the two are *at par*, belonging to the same order. Both are sense-data; that is, both are what appears to the consciousness. How can one sense-datum test the truth of another sense-datum ? How can one convict pass judgement on another convict ? Abhinavagupta says, "The appearance of *artha kriyā* is just another appearance,[1] and so *arthakriyākāritva* is not the reality of things.'[2]

In the western philosophy the criticism of the correspondence theory of truth given by the coherence theorist, is more or less the same in substance as the criticism of *parataḥprāmāṇyavāda* by the idealistic *svataḥprāmāṇyavādin*. Correspondence theory is akin to *parataḥprāmāṇyavāda*. According to the correspondence theory, if the knowledge of a thing corresponds to the thing itself, then the knowledge is valid, and therefore, correspondence between knowledge and the thing is the test of truth. While

1. Here the word 'appearance' (*ābhāsa*) is used just in the epistemological sense meaning what appears as real.

2. अर्थक्रियाभासोऽपि च आभासान्तरमेव इति अर्थक्रियाकारित्वमपि न भावानाम् सत्त्वम् ।
arthakriyābhāso'pi ca ābhāsāntaram eva iti
arthakriyākāritvamapi na bhāvānaṁ sattvam.
IPV—1/8/6 (p. 330).

40. Criticism of the correspondence theory.

criticising Locke (who is an advocate of correspondence theory), Berkeley points out that correspondence can be accepted as the test of truth only when both the terms of correspondence (that is, *knowledge* on the one hand and the *thing* on the other hand) are known. Our epistemological access is confined to one term—the knowledge or 'idea' only; we do not and cannot know the thing itself. Whenever we approach a thing in order to know it in itself, we can have it only as it appears to us, we cannot have it as it is in itself; *in itself* it may be different from what it *appears* to us, as what happens in the case of illusion or dream. In other words, we *cannot* know the thing; we can know only one of the two terms—only knowledge or what is called '*idea*' or '*appearance*' or '*sense-datum*'. Therefore, we cannot know whether our knowledge corresponds to the thing or not. Correspondence, therefore, is an impossible theory.

If the validity of knowledge cannot be known externally (*parataḥ*), what is the test of validity then ? The *svataḥprāmāṇyavādin* holds that validity is intrinsic in knowledge; knowledge is valid by itself. 'Validity arises by itself and is known by itself (*prāmāṇyaṁ svataḥ utpadyate svataḥ jñāyate ca*)' is the motto of the *svataḥprāmāṇyavādin* in general.

41. Non-contradiction is the test of truth.

According to the Tantrist who is a *svataḥprāmāṇyavādin*, every knowledge should be regarded as valid *so long as it is not contradicted by another knowledge*. Non-contradiction (*bādhābhāva*) or coherence, therefore, is the test of validity.[1] The dream-experience, for example, is true so long as it is not contradicted by the waking experience. So long as we are in dream, one knowledge coheres with (or is not contradicted by) another knowledge; and therefore it is taken to be valid. It is only when we wake up that the dream-knowledge becomes false, as the waking knowledge now contradicts the dream-knowledge. Therefore, the 'invalidity' (*aprāmāṇya*) or falsification of knowledge comes due to contra-

1. बाधाभावे प्रामाण्यम् इत्येतदर्थम् अवश्यसमर्थ्यो यो बाधव्यवहारः....
'bādhābhāve prāmāṇyam' ityetadartham avaśyasamarthyo yo bādhavyavahāraḥ ...IPV-1/7/6 (p. 290).

diction (*bādha*).[1] This is analogous to saying that a particular athlete is the champion so long as he or she is not defeated by another athlete. To be champion means to be non-defeated.

42. Artha-kriyā too reveals only the coherence.

In the defence of the coherence theory or of *svataḥprāmāṇy-avāda* we can say that if correspondence cannot be known, or if knowledge cannot be validated by external sources, what else is the test of truth? The only way is to regard knowledge as valid so long as it is coherent or non-contradicted. Even the pragmatic test (*arthakriyākāritva*) is really another way of confirming the coherence. When by the pragmatic test it is revealed that the thing in question, say the *table*, has *artha-kriyā*, it simply means that the knowledge of the table is coherent. In the case of the mirage the water-waves are taken to be false, because now they are contradicted by the fresh knowledge. The point is that even the *parataḥprāmāṇyavādin* who applies the pragmatic test, is really indirectly applying the coherence theory without knowing it. Every one consciously or unconsciously uses the same. Abhinavagupta says, "This bādhya-bādhaka-bhāva (coherence) which is used in order to distinguish truth and falsity, is the life of all our behaviour."[2]

43. The idealistic ground of the coherence theory.

If we view the theory of intrinsic validity (*svataḥprāmāṇya-vāda*) from the perspective of idealistic metaphysics,[3] it will appear to be all the more significant. According to the idealistic view of knowledge, there is not much difference between knowledge and reality; what is known as real is nothing but appearance of consciousness, matter being non-existent.

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1. अप्रामाण्यं हि बाधबलात् भवति…… ।
aprāmāṇyaṁ hi bādhabalāt bhavati......
IPV—1/7/6 (Intr.) p. 289

2. अयं बाध्यबाधकभावः सत्यासत्यप्रविभाजनाय विश्वेषां व्यवहाराणां जीवितभूतः ।
ayaṁ bādhyabādhakabhāvaḥ satyāsatya-pravibhājanāya viśveṣāṁ vyavahārāṇāṁ jīvitabhūtaḥ. -IPV-1/7/6 (p. 290).

3. Tantrism may be taken to be an idealism, as the non-dualistic Tantras are clearly idealistic; Kāśmīra Śaivism which is the major system of the Tantric tradition, is an idealism.

Therefore, what I know is itself reality. This means that what is called illusion or dream too has epistemic reality; the illusion is real so long as it persists. The Advaita-Vedānta too accepts the *prātibhāsika* (illusory) and the *vyāvahārika* (phenomenal) as relatively real. Here too the logic is that the reality of the *jñeya* (the known or the object) consists in its being known or perceived ('*esse est percipi*' in the words of Berkeley). The point is that if the reality of what I know depends upon my knowing it, then knowledge is intrinsicly valid.

44. The illusory and the real are the two levels of consciousness.

We should not be misled to think that if according to the idealistic theory, knowledge itself is reality, then there is no difference between subjective illusion and objective knowledge. Every idealism (especially Kāśmīra Śaivism) accepts grades or levels of the *ideal* reality. What is called the objective world is the self-projection—not of the individual consciousness (*aṇu or paśu*) but of the cosmic consciousness, Śiva. It is the ordinary illusion that is a creation of the individual consciousness. Therefore, to the individual the knowledge of the world-appearance is as objective and real as anything. So far as the epistemological distinction between the illusory and the real is concerned, there is no difference between the realist and the idealist; the difference is only ontological—according to the idealist, the illusory and the real are the two levels of reality or consciousness.

It should be added here that in the Tantrism the ontology of world-appearence is accepted not on the basis of ordinary knowlege, nor is it speculative metaphysics; it is accepted on the basis of the Āgama-knowledge. Through our ordinary experience we can know only this much that the world *appears* before us; we cannot know whether it is false (mere appearance) or it is true (material reality). It is the Āgama-experience which reveals that the world is mere appearance or projection of consciousness, and not a material reality.

IV. THE THEORY OF ERROR :

The question of the validity of knowledge is related with the question of illusion or error. Therefore, it is pertinent to consider

the Tantric theory of illusion (or error). In the systems of Indian philosophy the theory of error (*khyātivāda*) of a particular system is based on the ontological position which the system holds. An independent and neutral analysis of illusion is to be rarely found. We can broadly classify the Indian theories of error under the two heads—realistic and idealistic, the distinction being obviously based on metaphysical consideration.

The realist does not accept illusion. Rāmānuja, for example, would say that all knowledge is true; there is no illusion at all.

45. Why the realist does not accept illusion.

The important thing is that the realist not only not accepts the world-illusion, he does not accept even the ordinary empirical illusion like the rope-snake. The reason why he does not accept even the ordinary illusion is, it seems, that if even one case of illusion becomes established, then he will have to accept at least the possibility of the world being illusory. The realist wants to deny the very possibility of world illusion. So he tends to maintain that illusion does not at all exist; the so-called illusory object is a real thing. In the case of the rope-snake illusion, for example, the knowledge of the snake is real one, it has somehow or other got mixed with the knowledge of the rope. As to how the knowledge of the snake has got mixed with the knowledge of the rope, every realistic system has got its own explanation.

The *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika*, for example, would say that the snake which we perceive in the rope, does exist elsewhere (*anyathā*); it has come over here by the way of what the *Naiyāyika* calls the *jñānalakṣaṇa pratyakṣa*; and so the knowledge of the snake is really a case of the knowledge of the object elsewhere (*anyathā-khyāti*). Rāmānuja would say that the snake is actually present in the rope—everything is present in everything (*pañcīkaraṇa*); the snake already implicitly present in the rope is now explicitly presented to consciousness. So, the knowledge of the snake in the rope is a case of perceiving the real snake (*sat-khyāti* or *yathārtha-khyāti*). The *mīmāṁsaka* (Prabhākara) explains the case of error (illusion) as non-apprehension (*akhyāti*) of the distinction between two knowledges put together. In the knowledge of the rope-snake there

46. The realistic explanation of error.

are actually two knowledges—the knowledge of the snake coming from memory, and the knowledge of the rope resulting from perception; and the error is due to the non-cognition of the distinction between the two (*akhyātivāda*).

In all the realistic explanations of error attempt has been made to show that what is called error is really knowledge—it has corresponding object; the only thing is that it has got mixed with something else (say the rope) in the present context. In criticism of the realistic theory of error the idealist would point out that what the realist misses (perhaps deliberately) is the fact that the illusory is identified with the real—the illusory takes the place of the real. The snake (rope-snake) replaces the rope; the rope is not perceived, what is 'perceived' is snake. That I 'see' or know the snake is a fact, and it is true that there is no snake there—it is the rope. There may be real snake elsewhere, but what about *this* snake which I am 'seeing' ?—it is certainly not there. The point is that *this* snake is a mental projection—a subjective creation and not an objective reality. The realist connives in accepting the subjective element in the case of illusion, but his attempt is futile, as the subjective element is absolutely clear—illusion cannot at all be explained without this. The realist is really trying to confuse, bringing far-fetched unrealistic explanations. We can doubt the illusoriness of the world as such, but there can be no doubt in the empirical cases of illusion like the rope-snake or the dream-object. How can we deny that what we 'see' in the dream is an ideal projection of our mind ?

47. Criticism of the realistic theory.

The explanation of error given by all the idealistic systems is more or less the same in substance; they all accept illusion as subjective creation having only epistemic reality. Of course, they use different languages emphasising different aspects of illusion. The Buddhist (*vijñānavādin*) would say that the snake which we 'perceive' in the rope, is not there in the rope; it is in fact in the subject or the self (or the mind), and is projected there on the rope. The knowledge of the snake, therefore, is a case of knowing the ideal projection of one's own self (*ātma-khyāti*). The Advaita-Vedānta emphasises the fact that

48. Illusion is a subjective creation.

illusion comes under a third category (the category of false—*mithyā*) different from the accepted dual categories of real (*sat*) and unreal (*asat*). The rope-snake is not real, and yet it appears ; and, therefore, it cannot be described either as *sat* or as *asat* (*anirvacanīya-khyāti*).

49. *The apūrṇa-khyāti.*

Tantrism (Kāśmīra Śaivism) points out that the illusory cannot be said to be wholly false, as it is not mere nothing—it is a projection or an actual ideal creation of consciousness. That the illusory (say, the rope-snake) is a material entity independent of the knowing self, is an incomplete (apūrṇa) view of the rope-snake; the complete view is that it is an ideal projection of consciousness (the self or the subject). Illusion, therefore, is a case of partial or incomplete knowledge (*apūrṇa-khyāti*).[1] Of course, illusion is a case of ignorance (*akhyāti* or *ajñāna*) ; but ignorance itself is not construed negatively. The literal meaning of *ajñāna* (ignorance) is the absence of *jñāna* (knowledge) ; but illusion is obviously not the absence of knowledge (jñānābhāva),[2] really it is wrong knowledge. Wrong knowledge again means incomplete or imperfect knowledge (*apūrṇa-jñāna*).[3] In *Tantrāloka* ignorance (*ajñāna*) is defined as the incomplete knowledge of the object.[4] When I 'see' the snake in the rope, it is not the absence of knowledge, for I am actually 'seeing' or

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1. इत्यपूर्णख्यातिरूपा अख्यातिरेव भ्रान्तितत्त्वम् ।
ityapūrṇakhyātirūpā akhyātireva bhrāntitattvam.
—IPV - 2/3/13, Vol. II (p. 113).

2. अज्ञानमिति न ज्ञानाभावश्चातिप्रसङ्गतः ।
ajñānamitina jñānābhavaścātiprasaṅgataḥ. —T. A. 1/25

3. ननु अज्ञानशब्दस्य अपूर्णं ज्ञानमर्थः ।
nanu ajñānaśabdasya apūrṇaṁ jñānamarthaḥ.
—T. A. (*Viveka*) -1/25 (Intr.), p. 57.

4. अतो ज्ञेयस्य तत्त्वस्य सामस्त्येनाप्रथात्मकम् ॥
ज्ञानमेव तदज्ञानं शिवसूत्रेषु भाषितम् ॥
ato jñeyasya tattvasya sāmastyenāprathātmakam,
jñānameva tadajñānaṁ śivasūtreṣu bhāṣitam.
—T. A., 1/26.

knowing the snake; the only thing is that I am not knowing the snake in its reality, and, therefore, my knowledge of the snake is incomplete. The reality of the snake is that it is a projection or appearance (*ābhāsa*) of my mind. When I come to know that the snake is not an independent material object but a projection (*ābhāsa*) of my mind, then I know the full truth, and my knowledge of the snake is now complete or perfect (*pūrṇa*). The same is true in the case of the dream-object. To know the dream object (say, a tiger) as an independent object different from my consciousness, (this is illusion), is an incomplete or imperfect knowledge of the tiger; but to know it as an iedal projection of my own consciousness, and, therefore, not different from me, is to have complete or perfect knowledge of the same.

The Tantric theory of error, *apūrṇakhyāti*, although substantially not different from the *ātmakhyāti* of Buddhism or the *anirvacanīyakhyāti* of Advaita Vedānta, seems to have deeper insight so far as the real nature of illusion (or the ontology of illusion) is concerned. The illusory is generally taken to be nothing, and therefore it has not been granted any ontological status at all. The apūrṇakhyātivādin, however, points out that the illusory is not mere nothing, as it is the appearance or projection (*ābhāsa*) of consciousness; there can be no illusion without the consciousness (or mind) projecting (or appearing as) the illusory object. This means the illusory object is true as appearance of consciousness - the appearance *as appearance* is quite real. To be more clear, the illusory object is false only in the sense that it is not an independent material thing; as the projected ideal appearance it is not false. The cinema-show, for example, is illusory or false only in the sense that what we see on the screen are not real objects; but that they are photo-appearances projected from the film-reel, cannot be denied. What we see on the screen is true as photo-reflection. The same is true in the case of dream and other cases of illusion. The dream-world is a projection or appearance of consciousness, and as the process of appearance it is true.

50. *Apūrṇakhyāti* shows a deeper insight.

It is in this sense that Abhinavagupta calls the *ābhāsa* (appearance) real. He does not mean that the *ābhāsa* is the copy

of a real material entity; what he means is that the *ābhāsa* is a self-projected reflection in consciousness, and *as such* it is true. He does not grant to the illusory object any ontological status in the sense of being a material entity; for him too the illusory is purely epistemic. But the point is that the epistemic itself is ontological in the sense that it is a real process of projecting ideal appearances. The appearance, therfore, is false in one sense (in the sense of being a material object) and true in another sense (in the sense of being reflection of appearance). This is why Plato maintains that the world of shadows (appearance) partakes in reality (the world of ideas). The shadow *as shadow*, or the reflection *as reflection* is real.

51. Appearance *as appearance* is real.

The ultimate object of the theory of *apūrṇakhyāti*, as o fany theory of error, is to serve the ontological purpose—to determine the status of the knowledge of the world. The world is an appearance of consciousness. Of course, the world-appearance is not a creation of the individual consciousness; it is the projection of the cosmic consciousness, Śiva. To the individual mind it apppears objective and real. The individual illusion (like rope-snake, dream, etc.) is an illusion within a greater illusion; it is 'like a dream within a dream or like a boil on the goitre.'[1]

52. *Apūrṇakhyāti* on the ontological side.

Like the ordinary illusion, the world-illusion also is a partial or incomplete knowledge, as the world is not known in its reality or entirety. In reality the world is a projection or ideal appearance (or ideational activity—*vimarśa*) of the cosmic consciousness, Śiva, and as such it is substantially not different from Śiva. When the world is known as such, then the knowledge of the world is complete. Even otherwise the knowledge of the world is not completely false, for the world is

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1. मायापदं हि सर्वं भ्रान्तिः तत्रापि तु स्वप्ने स्वप्न इव गण्डे स्फोट इव अपरेयं भ्रान्तिरुच्यते ।

māyāpadaṁ hi sarvaṁ bhrāntiḥ, tatrāpi tu svapne svapna iva gaṇḍe sphoṭa iva apareyaṁ bhrāntirucyate.

IPV-2/3/13 (p. 114).

not unknown; the knowledge of the world is only partial or incomplete.

53. Sense of duality is spiritual error.

From the point of view of the spiritual seeker, the sense of duality (*dvaita-prathā*) is the real ignorance or illusion. In reality the world is an ideal manifestation or self-projection of my own higher self which is Absolute or Śiva; the individual beings are my own. But I wrongly consider them to be different from me. I am really the Absolute, embracing everything within my fold, but ignorant as I am of my real nature, I confine myself to a limited self (*aṇu* or *paśu*– the individual self), bifurcating myself from the rest of the world which is really myself. This apprehension of duality is the real illusion (or ignorance).[1] When I rise up to Śiva-consciousness and realise that I am one with the entire universe, then my knowledge of myself and the world is complete or perfect (*pūrṇajñāna*).[2] The nearer I proceed to the goal and the more comprehensive my attitude becomes, the more complete my knowledge is, and the more it relieves me from *saṁsāra*.[3]

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1. (a) द्वैतप्रथा तदज्ञानं तुच्छत्वाद् बन्ध उच्यते ।
dvaitaprathā tadajñānaṁ tucchatvād bandha ucyate.
—TA-1/30 (p.59).
(b) तस्मात् संविदद्वैतात्मनः पूर्णस्य रूपस्य अख्यानात् 'द्वैतप्रथा' एव 'अज्ञानम्'—।
tasmāt saṁvidadvaitātmanaḥ pūrṇasya rūpasya
akhyānāt 'dvaitaprathā' eva 'ajñānam'.
—TA (*viveka*)-1/30 (p. 61).
2. विश्वभावैकभावात्मस्वरूपप्रथनं हि यत् ।
अणूनां तत्परं ज्ञानं तदन्यदपरं बहु ॥
viśvabhavaikabhāvātma-svarūpaprathanaṁ hi yat.
aṇūnaṁ tatparaṁ jñānaṁ tadanyadapraṁ bahu.
—TA-1/141 (p. 181)
3. यत्तु ज्ञेयसतत्त्वस्य पूर्णपूर्णप्रथात्मकम् ।
तदुत्तरोत्तरं ज्ञानं तत् तत् संसारशान्तिदम् ॥
yattu jñeyasatattvasya pūrṇapūrṇaprathātmakam.
taduttarottaraṁ jñānaṁ tattat saṁsāraśāntidam.
—TA-1/23 (p. 63).

V. THE LIMITS OF KNOWLEDGE

54. The ordinary knowledge is limited.

We have already seen that there are two types (or two levels) of knowledge—the ordinary knowledge (which we all normally possess) and the Āgamic knowledge (which is had from the seers). So far as the ordinary knowledge is concerned, it has got its limits. It reveals only the knowing consciousness (which is called the self) and what is given to it (the *ābhāsas* or appearances). We have already discussed[1] the self-revelatory character of the self; the knowledge of the *ābhāsas* (or what is given to consciousness) too is self-illumined.[2]

55. The ontology of the self is based on the Āgamic knowledge.

Beyond the knowing self and the *ābhāsas* nothing can be known by the ordinary knowledge. The Tantrist is clear on this point. He maintains that though the self is 'seen' (or known by ordinary knowledge), yet its real identity as Śiva is not 'seen' or known.[3] The ordinary knowledge is limited to the epistemological nature of the self, that is, to the knowing unity of consciousness; it cannot reveal the ontological nature of the self—it cannot determine whether the self is an entity (soul or Śiva or a product of the body or whatsoever it may be) or it is a bare principle of knowing. That this self is Śiva is revealed by the Āgamic knowledge and not by the ordinary knowledge. In other words, the recognition (pratyabhijñā) of the real identity of the self is provided from the Āgamic side.

All the arguments of the '*cogito ergo sum*' type prove the epistemological self only. Descartes mistook it to be the ontological self; but later on it was pointed out by the critics that the Cartesian argument involved the fallacy of four terms. The '*cogito ergo sum*' proves only the knowing principle; it does not prove that

1. See page 109.
2. See page 105.
3. किन्तु मोहवशादस्मिन् दृष्टेऽप्यनुपलक्षिते ।
शक्त्याविष्करणेनेयं प्रत्यभिज्ञोपदर्श्यते ॥
kintu mohavaśādasmin dṛṣṭepyanupalakṣite
śaktyāviṣkaraṇeneyaṁ pratyabhijñopadarśyate. IP—i, 2/3

this knowing principle is an entity, a soul. That it is soul or is Śiva can be maintained only on the basis of the Āgamic knowledge.

By the ordinary knowledge we do not know Śiva, we do not know matter either. What we 'see' as matter is an appearance (*ābhāsa*) of matter. We can at the most say that the world appears to us; we cannot be certain whether it is a real material world or a dream-world projected by some mind. It should be made clear in this context that if the realist's position (that the world is real or material) cannot be known, the idealist's position (that the world is false or mental projection) cannot be known either; we cannot know whether the world is true or false. The Tantrist idealist accepts the world as false (or ideal projection) not on the basis of the ordinary knowledge; he does so again on the basis of the Āgamic knowledge.

56. The idealistic position is based on the Āgamic knowledge.

By the ordinary knowledge we cannot also know the existence of the other selves. We can infer other selves on the basis of the bodily movements supposedly belonging to them, but we cannot be logically sure, for the bodily activities may be mere appearances in a dream. In other words, we cannot step out of the solipsism of the knowing self merely on the basis of the ordinary knowledge. The Tantrist accepts the existence of the other selves again on the basis of the Āgamic knowledge. Of course, the independent existence of the other selves is indicated or suggested by inference, but this can be confirmed only by the Āgamic knowledge.

57. Acceptance of other selves too is based on the Āgamic knowledge.

Thus we see that the entire ontology of Tantrism is based on the Āgamic knowledge. If we do not take help of the Āgamic knowledge and proceed merely on the basis of the ordinary knowledge, we are bound to land into solipsism. Our ordinary knowledge cannot take us beyond the knowing self and the *ābhāsas* But for the Āgamic knowledge we cannot break through our metaphysical confinement, we shall ever remain sceptic or agnostic. That it is logically proper to accept the Āgamic epistemology we have already discussed.[1] The Āgamist makes a strong case for himself, and his position warrants the attention of the philosophers.

58. The Tantric ontology is based on the Āgamic knowledge.

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1. See page 115 to 119.

Appendix-3

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TANTRIC YOGA

(THE CONCEPT OF KUṆḌALINĪ)

In India broadly speaking there have been two different traditions of yoga having respectively different philosophical orientation. Subsequently we find two different definitions or conceptions of yoga. The first is represented by the *Rāja-yoga* of *Patañjali*. It is broadly accepted by the Advaita-Vedānta school. Much of it is similar to the yoga found in Buddhism and Jainism. The second tradition is that of the Tantric yoga represented by the Śaiva-Śākta school. It is also present in the Vaiṣṇava tradition ; a school of Buddhism known as *Vajra-yāna* too is explicitly Tantric.

1. The two traditions of yoga.

So far as the goal of yoga is concerned, the two traditions are in agreement. Attainment or realisation of the Self is accepted as the goal of yoga in both; but the nature of this goal (Self) and the technique of achieving it is different. Viewing the two traditions from the point of the technique they adopt and the nature of the goal they accept, the first (the *Pātañjala* yoga) may be called the yoga of secession and alienation, while the second (the Tantric yoga) may be termed as the yoga of integration and sublimation.

The Pātañjala yoga is based on the Sāṅkhya metaphysics which accepts the Self (or *Puruṣa* as it is called) as *kevala* (literally the 'alone', meaning devoid of *Prakṛti*). This *puruṣa* or the self is the principle of pure consciousness, but it is somehow associated with an alien principle called *Prakṛti* which is the principle of materiality and ignorance. *Prakṛti* is the bondage and, therefore, all suffering is due to the association of *Puruṣa* with *Prakṛti*. The *Puruṣa* or the Self is the pure 'seer' or knower (*draṣṭā*) and not the doer (kartā), as all activity belongs to *Prakṛti*. The goal of yoga, therefore, is the attainment of the real state of the *Puruṣa*,

2. The pātañjala yoga.

which is pure *draṣṭā* (seer—not doer), devoid of *Prakṛti*.[1] This state is called *'Kaivalya'* (literally the state of 'alone-ness', meaning that the *puruṣa* or the self is extricated from the alien elements and is seated purely in itself).[2] Naturally, the technique of attaining this state would be to dissociate oneself from *Prakṛti* by silencing the modifications or activities of *prakṛti* adopted by oneself. Patañjali, therefore, defines yoga as the secession or silencing (*nirodha*) of the modifications or ripplings (v*ṛttis*) of mind (citta).[3] The point is that what is emphasised here is the dissociating or negating oneself from *Prakṛti* rather than assimilating or integrating it (which will be the Tantric way) ; the emphasis here is on silencing or withdrawing oneself rather than expressing oneself in spontaneous activity (which again will be the Tantric way).

3. The Tantric yoga is based on the activistic philosophy.

The Tantric yoga, on the contrary, is based on the activistic metaphysics of the Tantra where the self or consciousness is conceived not as silent spectator (pure *'draṣṭā'*) but as spontaneous doer (*spandamāna*) ; consciousness is conceived here as force or energy (*Śakti*) expressing itself in spontaneous activity (*Spanda*). Of course, this activity is different from the volitional ethical action, technically called *Karma*. *Karma* is the motivated and effortful action which results from the state of bondage. The Tantric activity, on the contrary, is the free, effortless and motiveless activity which spontaneously arises in the fullness of *ānanda* (joy or bliss). This is technically called

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1. तदा द्रष्टु : स्वरूपेऽवस्थानम् ।
tadā draṣṭuḥ svarūpe' vasthānam.

–Pātañjala Yoga-sūtra 1/3

2. पुरुषार्थशून्यानां गुणानां प्रतिप्रसव : कैवल्यं स्वरूपप्रतिष्ठा वा चितिशक्तेरिति ।
puruṣārthaśūnyānāṁ guṇānāṁ pratiprasavaḥ kaivalyaṁ svarūpapratiṣṭhā vā citiśakteriti—Ibid, 4/34.

3. योगश्चित्तवृत्तिनिरोधः ।
yogaścittavṛttinirodhaḥ—Ibid, 1/2.

Kriyā[1] or *Vimarśa* or *Spanda*, and its potentiality is called *Śakti*. The ultimate consciousness which is the Self or Śiva, is actually *Śiva* and *Śakti* or *Jñāna* and *Kriyā* or *Prakāśa* and *Vimarśa*—both in one. In the Pātañjala tradition of yoga, however, the self is conceived only as *Śiva or Prakāśa* or *Jñāna*; the *Śakti* or *Vimarśa* or *Kriyā* aspect is left out.

4. Sahaja-samādhi is the highest.

According to the Tantric Tradition, the state of Self-realisation (which is the goal of yoga) is not the inactive (*niṣkriya*) state of the 'seer' (*draṣṭā*) ; it is a state of effortless or spontaneous or natural activity. It is sometimes called the '*Sahajāvasthā*' (literally, the 'natural' state—it is natural to the Self) or '*Sahaja-samādhi*' which is in contrast with the *Nirvikalpa-samādhi* of the *Pātañjala yoga*. In the Pātañjala tradition the ultimate self is devoid of all activity and naturally therefore the *Nirvikalpa-samādhi* where all the activities—all the modifications of mind (*vṛttis* or *vikalpas*) have ceased to occur, is the highest state. In the *nirvikalpa* state the consciousness is fully awake—it is the seer, but there are no ripplings or *vikalpas* there ; it is actually the state of perfect silence (*śāntāvasthā*). The Tantric tradition does recognise this as an important state of consciousness where consciousness is at perfect rest ; it is actually symbolised by what is called the '*Śāmbhavī-mudrā*' of Śiva;[2] but it is not accepted as the ultimate or the highest state. The highest state is the *sahajāvasthā* where consciousness or the self fully remains in itself and yet freely expresses itself in spontaneous activity. This again is symbolised by the *Naṭarāja*[3] state of Śiva where Śiva, fully remaining in Himself,

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1. We have already discussed the *Kriyā* principle and have distinguished it from *Karma* (see pages 2-9).
2. In the *Śāmbhavī-mudrā* the consciousness (or Śiva) is fully awake, but the attention or focus of consciousness is directed inwards in oneself, all the external activities being suspended. This is exactly what is aimed at in the *nirvikalpa samādhi* of the Pātañjala yoga.
3. '*Naṭarāja*' is the state of dancing Śiva, which perfectly symbolises the state of spontaneity (*spanda* or *kriyā*).

spontaneously performs the dance of creation in the fullness of His joy. This is a state where one is a doer and yet not a doer. This may be paradoxically called the state of actionless activity or relaxed activity.[1]

From the point of view of yoga the above-mentioned Śakti is called ***Kuṇḍalinī*** or ***Kuṇḍalī*** or ***Kula-kuṇḍalinī***. ***Kuṇḍalinī*** which is the yogic name of consciousness conceived as force or energy (*citi-śakti*), is working at all the levels of existence, although latent or partially awakened. Now, the Tantric technique of attaining Self-realisation (which is the objeet of yoga) would be to arouse the latent ***Kuṇḍalinī***, or, negatively speaking, to clear the way of the expression of ***Kuṇḍalinī***. At the bodily level the ***Kuṇḍalinī*** is conceived as lying dormant in the *mūlādhāra cakra* at the base of the spine. The path of the expression or awakening of ***Kuṇḍalinī*** is said to be the spinal chord together with its fabulous *cakras* and the central yogic *nāḍī* (nerve)[2] called *suṣumnā* intertwined with *iḍā* and *piṅgalā*. This path of ***Kuṇḍalinī*** is blocked or only partially cleared. This path has to be cleared, the *cakras* have to be opened so that the awakened ***Kuṇḍalinī*** may express itself fully.

5. The Tantric definition of yoga.

In the light of the above-mentioned position we can very well understand the Tantric definition of yoga, namely, the awakening of ***Kuṇḍalinī*** or the opening of the *Cakras*.[3] The awakening of ***Kuṇḍalinī*** is intimately related to the opening or unfolding of

1. See Pages 8-9.
2. In the common parlance the word '*nāḍī*' has some ambiguity. In the *Āyurveda* (the Indian indigenous system of medicine) the word '*nāḍī*' means pulse, but the meaning taken in the yogic tradition comes very near the word 'nerve'. It is safer to translate *nāḍī* as nerve.
3. Unlike the *yoga-sūtras* of Patañjali, there is no systematic treatise of the Tantric yoga. Hence it is a little difficult to identify the official definition of the Tantric yoga. Here we have made an attempt to identify the same. Unfolding of the ***Kuṇḍalinī*** or *Cit-śakti* is the definition that precipitates after considering the Tantric treatment of yoga as a whole.

the *cakras*; in fact, the two are simultaneous, and therefore they may be regarded as the two aspects of one and the same process. Unlike in the *Pātañjala* tradition (where yoga is coneived as dissociation from *Prakṛti* or *Śakti*), in the Tantric tradition yoga is understood as unfolding of the *Śakti* which is really *cit-śakti* (sentient energy). And *Kuṇḍalinī* is the yogic and symbolic synonym of the *Cit-śakti*. Unfolding of *Kuṇḍalinī-śakti*, therefore, may be regarded as the Tantric definition of yoga.

6. *Kuṇḍalinī* is already partially awake.

According to Tantrism, the basic power or energy which is working in the entire universe, is *Cit-śakti*, symbolically called *Kuṇḍalinī*.[1] The same is working in the individual. The *Kuṇḍalinī* is not fully asleep, otherwise no working in the individual or in the universe would be possible. It is already awakened to some extent. Our body is vibrating with life (*prāṇa*), our sense-organs of seeing, hearing etc. are functioning, our mind is working. This means that *Kuṇḍalinī* or *cit-śakti* is already awake. It is expressing itself in the form of life in the body and in the form of mental activities in the mind. In other words, we are living or working or thinking because Kuṇḍalinī is already partially awakened. Had it been completely dormant, we would have been inert (*jaḍa*).[2] The beauty of our working is proportionate to the amount of the awakening of Kuṇḍalinī.

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1. The working of Kuṇḍalinī is not confined to the body and the spinal chord, as some people think. The biological part is just one aspect of Kuṇḍalinī. Kuṇḍalinī has much wider connotation; it works at all the levels of existence—physical, mental and spiritual. In fact, Kuṇḍalinī means the all-embracing *Cit-śakti* which is the very life (*prāṇa* of the entire universe.

2. It is stated in the Upaniṣads that it is the Ātman or Brahman (or Cit-śakti or Kuṇḍalinī in the Tantric terms) by whose light all this is radiant (*tasya bhāsā sarvamidaṁ vibhāti*—Kaṭhopaniṣat 5/15). The mind thinks by that very light (*yenāhurmano matam*) ; the eyes see because of it (*yena cakṣūnsi paśyati*); life throbs due to it (*yena prāṇaḥ praṇīyate*), and so on (Kenopaniṣat 4 to 8). The point is that unless the *Cit-śakti* is already working, nothing can work.

In other words, the more the Kuṇḍalinī is awakened, the more beauty, more life, more joy there is.

Broadly speaking, *Kuṇḍalinī* works at three levels—physical, mental and spiritual, and it is respectively called *Prāṇa-Kuṇḍalinī*, *Nāda-Kuṇḍalinī* and *Bodha-Kuṇḍalinī*. *Prāṇa-Kuṇḍalinī* works at the physical level. It expresses itself in the form of life (*prāṇa*) in the body. Generally speaking, *Prāṇa-Kuṇḍalinī* is only partially working, maintaining the normal life in the body. When it is awakened, the body throbs with radiant life; it may become jubilant and youthful. The more the *prāṇa-kuṇḍalinī* is awakened, the more the youthful energy is exhibited in the body. When it is fully awakened, the *cakras* are opened and the body becomes fully controlled. At this stage the yogins are said to be able to dematerialise and rematerialise their bodies at will. The yogin also acquires extra-ordinary powers like clairvoince, telepathy, telekinesis, etc.[1]

7. The *Prāṇa Kuṇḍalinī*.

The *Nāda kuṇḍalinī* works at the mental level. It expresses itself in the form of thinking, attending, memorising, etc. We are performing these mental activities because the *nāda-kuṇḍalinī*[2]

1. The *Yoga-sūtras* of Patañjali too in the *Vibhūtipāda* speak of the extra-ordinary powers which the yogin acquires by controlling his *prāṇa* and thought.
2. The following may be the explanation of why it is called '*Nāda*'-*kuṇḍalinī* We have already seen that Kuṇḍalinī or Śakti is essentially activity (*kriyā*). Moreover, Tantrism, mainly being an idealistic system, accepts consciousness (*Cit* or *Citi*) as the only reality; there is no matter. This further means that there is no physical or material activity—all activity is 'mental' or in consciousness. This is why Śakti or Kriyā is called *Vimarśa* ('*Vimarśa*' literally means 'thinking' or 'ideation'). Further, the Tantric theory is that all thinking is in language (*vāk* or speech); we cannot think with out using language. And since language is primarily phonetical, it is called '*nāda*' (sound). *Nāda*, therefore, ultimately means the activity in consciousness – thinking activity or 'mental' activity. Naturally, the *kuṇḍalinī* working at the mental level may well be called '*Nāda*'-kuṇḍalinī.

is already partially awake. When it is more awakened, we acquire more mental powers. The composition of a poet, the beauty of an orator, the creation of an artist, the brilliance of a thinker—all this is suggestive of the more awakening of the *nāda-kuṇḍalinī*. In the history of mankind we come across the child prodigies having extra-ordinary mental powers. This is due to the awakening of the same *Kuṇḍalinī*. Sometimes for some reason *Kuṇḍalinī* is awakened abruptly and as a result one acquires abrupt mental powers. This may also lead to mental abnormality. This is possible due to the mal-functioning of *Kuṇḍalinī*.[1]

8. The *Nāda-kuṇḍalinī*.

The third level is that of *Bodha-kuṇḍalinī* or *Jñāna-kuṇḍalinī*. This is the spiritual level. The spiritual awakening of man is suggestive of the awakening of the *bodha-kuṇḍalidnī* in him. *Bodha* or Jñāna (literally meaning knowledge or wisdom) is the awareness of the reality of things. In reality I am the all-embracing Self; there are no 'others' to me. But unfortunately I consider them to be 'other' to me. This is *ajñāna* (ignorance).[2] When I realise my unity with all, I am a *Jñānī* or *Buddha* ('Buddha' means one who has '*bodha*' or *jñāna*). When one's *bodha-kuṇḍalinī* is aroused, one feels one's unity with all, one's heart throbs with the universal love. The state of the awakening of the *bodha-kuṇḍalinī* is actually the state of Self-realisation. It may be said that a Ramkrishna Paramahansa or a Raman Maharsi (believed to have attained Self-realisation) has his *bodha*-kuṇḍalinī awakened.

9. The Bodha-kuṇḍalinī.

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1. It is possible that the abrupt, unmethodical and unnatural awakening of Kuṇḍalinī leads to undesirable results. Kuṇḍalinī is energy, and like any energy it needs be tamed and properly utilised. An unwise handling of Kuṇḍalinī may put one into difficulty. This is why the yoga of Kuṇḍalinī was kept a secret and was handed over to the disciple by the *guru* with utmost care. The yoga-practitioner is always advised to be under the guidance of a proper *guru*.

2. द्वैतप्रथा तदज्ञानम्........
dvaitaprathā tadajñānam-T. A. I/30 (p. 59).

10. Significance of the body-culture.

The *Prāṇa-kuṇḍalinī* has fascinated the attention of both the yogins and the scholars of yoga. Much is said and written about the *prāṇa*-kuṇḍalinī, and proportionately much less attention is paid to the *Nāda* and *Bodha* kuṇḍalinīs.[1] But the *nāda* and *bodha* levels of kuṇḍalinī are as important as the first one.

The emphasis on the *prāṇa*-kuṇḍalinī seems to be for two reasons. First, the treatment of the prāṇa-kuṇḍalinī has the promise of a healthy and happy bodily and mental life. Secondly, the physical or bodily culture has its bearing upon the mental and the spiritual culture. In so far as the bodily condition affects the mind and the spirit, the yoga of the body is quite significant. Change in the physical condition helps bring change in the mental and spiritual condition. This is why the importance of food is recognised.

The role of biological evolution cannot be ruled out. After all, the states of childhood, youth and old age are purely physical, but they uncontroversially affect the mind or consciousness. The unfolding of the mental faculties of a child depends upon the biological growth of the child from infancy to adolescence. Does this fact not suffice to show that change in the biological condition is enormously significant in the unfolding or expression of consciousness ? Use of particular drugs, infusion of special hormones into body, surgical operation of the significant parts of the brain, etc., undoubtedly effeot change in the mental condition. Certain medicines are found to be effective in the treatment of the psychiatric troubles like depression, melancholia, etc. When one is asleep or becomes unconscious, it is due to the change in the pysical condition, especially in the nervous system. When the brain-cells decay, we have dizziness, foggy consciousness and clouded memory; but when the brain bells are well-fed, the result is otherwise. Memorisation basically depends upon the biological nervous traits of memory in the brain. The behavioral patterns in the different species of animals is largely determined by the

1. Perhaps this is the reason why the layman identifies Kuṇḍalinī with the *prāṇa-kuṇḍalinī* only, leaving out the *nāda-kuṇḍalinī* and the *bodha-kuṇḍalinī*.

biological factors. These facts amply show that different bodily conditions are responsible for different consciousness--patterns. The point is that if by some technique we succeed in effecting potent change in the biological condition, it may result in the dawn of a new consciousness. The theory of the awakening of *Kuṇḍalinī* by effecting biological change with the help of the yogic techniques is based on this.

Moreover, body being the vehicle or apparatus of consciousness must be in the perfect condition in order that the expression of consciousness is facilitated. Finally, body is the basic means for the mental and spiritual development, and it must therefore be kept in perfect condition.[1]

The Tantra recognises the significance of the body, and advocates *Haṭha-yoga* for body-culturing. The *āsanas* performed in the proper way break the tension of the body and prepare the body for the easy movement of the *prāṇa-kuṇḍalinī*. The *prāṇāyāma* of various types directly hits the knot-points of the yogic nerves and the *cakras*, and helps them 'open' or unfold. The *mudrās* are meant for stabilising the result achieved by the *āsanas* and *prāṇāyāma*.

In this context it is pertinent to consider in brief the relation of the body with consciousness (or spirit), especially from the point of view of the Tantric yoga. The body is an apparatus for the expression of consciousness, as well as an obstruction in its path; the body is a veil or sheath captivating the consciousness within its folds. But if the veil is made transparent or is suitably modified, it does not obstruct. Another analogy may be of some help. The metal-wire is the conductor of electricity; but if the wire is rusted or carbonised, it does not conduct properly. When it is cleared of the rust and carbon, electricity flows through it easily and fully. Similarly when the

11. The relation of body with consciousness.

1. It is said in the Hindu scriptures that body is the first and the foremost means of religious and spiritual *sādhanā* (*śarīramādyaṁ khalu dharmasādhanam* शरीरमाद्यं खलु धर्मसाधनम् and, therefore, culturing and disciplining the body is the first *sādhanā*.

body is purified and cleared of the *'mala'* (specially the *tamoguṇa*), then the Kuṇḍalinī flows and expresses itself through the body. That is why the yogic practices aim at purification—the purification of the elements (*tattva-śuddhi*), the purification of the nerves (*nāḍī-śuddhi*), the purification of the nervous centres or plexuses (*cakra-śuddhi*). When the obstructing *tamas* is removed and the blocked nervous centres and plexuses are cleared, the *Cakras* (nervous centres or plexuses) unfold themselves; the unobstructed flow of the *prāṇa* (or the *prāṇic* energy) is increased to the maximum and the consciousness becomes much more active. (Consciousness or *Kuṇḍalinī* flows in the body in the form of the *prāṇic* energy).

12. The symbolic meaning of Kuṇḍalinī.

The anatomical existence of the *Kuṇḍalinī* is untraceable from the physiologist's point of view. The literal meaning of *Kuṇḍalinī* is 'coiled serpent'. ('Kuṇḍala' means coil and 'Kuṇḍalinī means the she-serpent having coils. Kuṇḍalinī is taken to be feminine because it is synoymous to *Śakti*, and *Śakti* is conceived as feminine). This 'coiled serpent' is conceived as lying half-asleep in the *mūlādhāra-cakra* at the base of the spine, close to the origin of the sex-organ. No anatomical proof is found for the existence of such a 'coiled' thing at the base of the spine, and therefore, 'Kuṇḍ*alinī*' should be understood as the symbolic synonym of the basic energy lying dormant in the person.

Although *Kuṇḍalinī* is synonymous to *Citi-Śakti* (Consciousness-force) in general, it can also be regarded in particular as symbolic of the sex-energy in particular. The ground for this interpretation is that when the *Kuṇḍalinī* is aroused, sex-energy (*Kāma-Śakti*) too is aroused. This interpretation is further corroborated by three more things. First, from the psychoanalytic point of view serpent is an unconscious symbol of sex or libido.[1] Secondly, it is conceived as seated at the base of the origin of the sex-organ ;—this may be taken as suggesting that Kuṇḍalinī is sex-energy. Thirdly, the conception of the upward travel of Kuṇḍalinī after being awakened, may be understood as the sublimation (or rising higher) of the sex-energy.

1. See page 67.

It is remarkable that from the Tantric point of view there is no contradiction between the conception of Kuṇḍalinī as *Citi-śakti* and the conception of Kuṇḍalinī as *Kāma-akti*, for the simple reason that in the Tantric tradition *Kāma-śakti* is regarded as the manifestation of the same *Citi-śakti*. The *Citi-śakti* expresses itself in the form of *Kāma-śakti* at the psycho-physical level of existence. And since at the psycho-physical level *Kāma* (sex) is the most potent expression of Kuṇḍalinī, Kuṇḍalinī is equated with the *Kāma-śakti*.

13. The anatomical existence of the Cakras.

So far as the anatomical existence of the nāḍīs and *cakras* is concerned, the physiologist does not find them as physical facts; but, however, the body-points where they are said to be located, certainly play a very important role in the anatomy of the body.[1] It is quite clear that the nervous system has the key-role; the *cakras* may be ragarded as the key-points in the nervous system—as nervous centres or plexuses. They may be hypothesized to be linked up with the autonomous nervous system; and tackling the *cakras* would mean tackling the autonomous nervous system.

Some persons theorise that the *nāḍīs* and the *cakras* are located in the astral body which is the subtler counter-part of the physical body. Although it is bracketed with the physical body, it has its independent existence also. It is said to be more powerful, influencing the physical body potently. It is affected from the side of the physical body too, just as mind is affected by body; and that is why yogic exercise on the physical body is meant to effect change in the astral body. The hypothesis of the *nāḍīs* and the *cakras* being located in the astral body is equally legitimate.

One thing is clear that the nervous system together with its centres or plexuses (*cakras*) whether located in the physical body

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1. The physiologist's attempt to discover the secrets of the body and the nervous system is still going on, and no final word has yet been said. The mysteries of the brain and the entire nervous system is yet to be unravelled. Scientific enquiry in the future may reveal amazing facts which may coincide with the ancient yogic tradition—in spirit, if not in form.

14. The yogic nervous system is the link between the body and the spirit.

or in the astral body, is the link between the body and the mind (consciousness) or between the matter and the spirit. The mind and the body mutually interact through this system. This nervous system, therefore, has the key-role in so far as we want to tackle the mind through the body (or the body through the mind). This yogic nervous system is the path through which the *Kuṇḍalinī* or *Citi-śakti* expresses itself. That is why the central yogic nāḍī, *Suṣumnā* (which is also called '*Brahma-nāḍī*), is said to be the road (*patha* or *mārga*) through which the *kuṇḍalinī* travels upwards. It is obligatory on the part of the yogic practitioner to remove the blockades and speed-breakers of this royal road.

'Purification' of the *nāḍīs* and the *cakras* is the language used to denote what is required for facilitating the flow of *Kuṇḍalinī-śakti*. 'Purification' is synonymous to 'removal of obstruction' or 'clearing of the path'. Other languages also may be used. The same may be said to be the 'opening' or 'unfolding' of the *cakras*. The *cakras* are deemed to be 'closed' or 'knotted', hence the question of 'opening' or 'untying of the knots'. The *cakras* are allegorized as lotus-flowers with closed petals, and hence this is a question of the 'blossoming' of the lotuses.

15. The mea-- ning of the '*Nāḍīśuddhi*'.

All this is the symbolic expression of what is yogically required in the body and the nervous system. A more recent and fashionable language is that of 'tension' and 'relaxation'. The *cakras* and the entire nervous system, blocked as they are, are in 'tension', as all blocking is essentially tension. When the blockades are removed and the working of the *cakras* facilitated and eased, it is 'relaxation'. The relaxed nerves pave the way of the advent of Kuṇḍalinī.

16. The physical is helped by the mental and the spiritual.

The purification or unfolding of the yogic nervous system, which signals the flow of the *prāṇa-Kuṇḍalinī*, is achieved by the physical yoga of *prāṇāyāma*, ete., no doubt; but one should not think that the yoga of the physical order is the only means of purifying the nerves and thereby arousing the *prāṇa-kuṇḍalinī*. The mental and the spiritual orders of yoga are equally effective. Mental yoga,

such as meditating on the *cakras*, brings the same result which the prāṇayāma etc. does. In fact, meditation aids the physical *Haṭha-yoga*. Effective Haṭhayoga is always accompanied and aided by meditation (*Rāja-yoga*).

The spiritual yoga like love, devotion, egolessness, too works purification of the nerves and causes the flow of the *prāṇa-kuṇḍalinī*. Sometimes the mental and the spiritual forms of yoga effect the awakening of the *prāṇa-kuṇḍalinī* more quickly than the physical one. Along with the physical, the mental and the spiritual are meaningful in the context of the awakening of the *prāṇa-kuṇḍalinī*. The point is that the mental and the spiritual orders of yoga are not only important and necessary in themselves, but they are extremely significant in the physical context of the awakening of the *prāṇa-kuṇḍalinī* too.

17. The mental yoga.

The physical, the mental and the spiritual forms of yoga may be understood to come under the three hierarchical categories of *upāya* (means) mentioned in the Tantras. They are the *āṇavopāya* (or *kriyopāya*), the *śāktopāya* (or *jñānopāya*) and the *śāmbhavopāya* (or *icchopāya*). The physical yoga would come under the *āṇavopāya*, the mental one under the *śāktopāya* and the spiritual one under the '*śāmbhavopāya*', The mental yoga chiefly consists of *dhyāna* (meditation). Mental repetition of *mantra*[1] too comes under this category. *Dhyāna* relaxes or silences the mind. When the mind is relaxed, the creative mental energy is released, and one becomes more mentally active. *Dhyāna* on the bodily parts relaxes the body too. That is why the yogic practitioner meditates on the *cakras*. Meditation on the *cakras* help them 'open' or 'blossom' by relaxing them.

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1. '*Mantra*' does not mean merely the verbal formulae or sentence to be oft-repeated (*japa*) ; it actually means pondering over a particular idea (mananān mantraḥ—मननात् मन्त्रः) So, 'japa' (repetition of *mantra*) means thinking or 'feeling' the idea (tajjapaḥ tadarthabhāvanam—तज्जपः तदर्थभावनम्).

There are three types or levels of *dhyāna* (meditation).

18. The three levels of dhyāna. The first level of *dhyāna* consists in concentrating the mind on one particular object or one particular idea; it is *sālamba* or *savikalpa* (having object or content). This form of *dhyāna* helps mind flow in one direction; this is preparatory to the higher level where the mind becomes contentless. The first level of *dhyāna* may be said to be in line with the *savikalpa samādhi*. The second level of *dhyāna* consists in 'not thinking' or making the mind contentless or objectless (*nirālamba or nirvikalpa*). To be able to keep the mind without thinking anything is a remarkable achievement; this results in a high degree of mental relaxation. This second level of *dhyāna* may be said to be in line with the *nirvikalpa samādhi*. The third level of *dhyāna*, which is the most important one from the Tantric point of view, consists in completely withdrawing oneself from all voluntary thinking and allow the mind to work in a relaxed way. In this stage the yogin does not do or think anything from his own side; he is seated in himself and at the same time allows the spontaneous or natural thinking (*vimarśa*) of his mind to flow. He is a spontaneous doer and at the same time a neutral spectator (*draṣṭā*) of his own mind. This level of *dhyāna* may be said to be in line with what is called the *sahajasamādhi*.

The spiritual yoga mainly consists in removing the ego-

19. The spiritual yoga. sense (*ahaṅkāra*). All other *sādhanās* centre round this. The ego is the main block or obstruction in the flow of the 'Energy' or *Kuṇḍalinī* which is the Consciousness or the Self. For the effacement of the ego-sense there are two inter-related and mutually complementary methods. The one is surrendering or merging the ego in the Self or being in tune with the Self. This is what is meant by *Bhakti* (the path of Devotion) in the Tantric Tradition.[1] This is self-

1. Commenting on the word '*dāsya*' (self-surrender or the sense of being the divine 'slave'), Abhinavagupta says that *dāsya* is really the ability of being one with the nature of Śiva, which is Freedom. (......dāsaḥ, tasya bhāva ityanena parameśvara-rūpaśvātantryapātratā uktā—दासः, तस्य भाव इत्यनेन परमेश्वररूप-स्वातन्त्र्यपात्रता उक्ता ।) -IPV 1/1/1 (page 14)

purification too. Bhakti means surrender to the Lord (or the Higher Self), and surrender to the Lord or being in tune with the Lord naturally means self-purification, for the Lord is pure and wants the devotee to become pure-hearted.

The other method of the effacement of the ego-sense, which is perhaps the most efficacious and potent one, is the cultivation of universal love—feeling oneness with all. When one feels one's unity with others, naturally one unconsciously breaks off one's individual ego-shell. Universal consciousness melts the ego-consciousness.

20. The 'deepening' and the 'widening' of consciousness.

The first method, namely, the silencing of the ego or merging of it in the Higher Self, may be called the 'deepening' of consciousness (as one reaches the inner recesses or depths of the self), while the other one, namely, the universal love, may be called the 'widening' of consciousness (as one spreads oneself in all). Similarly, the first one may be called 'vertical' growth of consciousness (as one enters deep or rises higher in the inner consciousness), while the other one may be called 'horizontal' growth of consciousness (again as one spreads oneself in the universe or feels unity with all persons). The two are mutually dependent; when one's consciousness is deepened or grown vertically, it is also widened or grown horizontally, and the *vice-versa*. This can be likened to the growth of a tree—the entering of the roots of the tree deep into the soil, on the one hand, and the widening of the bulk of the tree, on the other, are mutually inter-related.

21. The Tantra advocates the integral view of yoga.

Although the physical, the mental and the spiritual yogas are specially meant for awakening the *prāṇa*, the *nāda* and the *bodha* kuṇḍalinīs respectively, the three are really inter-related. This is because the body, the mind and the spirit are inter-related. Of course, it is true that the three yogas work independently in their own respective fields, and each one is necessarily needed for the culturing of its own special field; but it is also true that none of the three can work exclusively if perfect success is aimed at. Therefore, what is required is the

integral yoga which combines all the three. The Tantra yoga advocates an integral view of yoga combining together the physical yoga of *āsana* and *prāṇāyāma* (*Haṭhayoga*), the mental yoga of meditation (*Rājayoga*) and the spiritual yoga of universal love (*Adhyātma yoga*).

What we mostly find today is a partial or one-sided view of yoga. Some yoga-teachers, for example, confine themselves to the *Haṭha-yoga* paying little attention to the mental and the spiritual side. There are still some ones who emphasize only meditation. There are also some *adhyātmavādins* who can at the most give concession to *Rāja-yoga*, but who laugh at *Haṭha-yoga* calling it physical gymnastic or circus. All these are partial views of yoga. All the three forms of yoga have cumulative effect; and, therefore, the comprehensive view of yoga which combines all the three, is the proper one.

The Tantric view of yoga takes the whole life into consideration and presents a way of life in which the entire life becomes yoga. Yoga is not understood as a segregated practice, but it is understood as permeating the whole life. Therefore, the Tantric yoga is a religion or a way of life. The point is that yoga is not merely prāṇāyāma or meditation; the rest of the secular activities too are to be made yoga. This is like the Gītā view in which all *karma* becomes yoga.[1]

22. The uniqueness of the Tantric yoga.

The Tantric yoga or religion (or way of life) is marked by the positive attitude towards life and the world. We have already discussed in detail the significance of the Tantric way of life,[2] and so it will be superfluous to discuss the same again. It must suffice to say here that the uniqueness of the Tantric yoga consists of two things, namely, (i) activism and (ii) positive attitude towards life.

1. The Gītā view of yoga and the Tantric view of yoga are quite similar. In fact, the Gītā can be far better understood if it is construed in the Tantric way.
2. See pages 43 to 88. The entire section entitled, 'Religious and Cultural Significance of the Tantric Tradition', is really meant for pointing out the significance of the Tantric yoga.

Unlike the yoga of Patañjali whose aim lies in the *nirvikalpa smādhi*, free from all activism, the Tantric yoga is activistic from the beginning to the end. The Pātañjala yoga may be accepting activism in the beginning as the means (and finally rejecting it as the end) ; but The Tantric yoga is activistic both as the means and as the end.

23. The actualisation of the potentiality.

The potential activity and the seed-desires are already there in the *aṇu* (individual soul) and they need be actualised or externalised in order that the self may be realised. This may be likened to the growth of a tree from the seed. In order that the seed realises its fullness, its potentialities must be actualised and exhausted. For self-realisation the potentialities of the person must be exhausted. This involves activity. Actualisation of potentiality is activity. That is why the Tantric yoga is activistic. It is the yoga or religion of the house-holder (*gṛhastha*) and not of the renunciant (*sannyāsin*). It is similar to the Gītā view which prescribes the path of activity.

24. The Tantric yoga moves in line with the Nature.

In the person there is already a slow natural process of the actualisation of the potential activity; and yoga hastens and regulates this process in the desired way. All Tantric yoga consists in allowing the natural flow of activity through the desired channels. Yoga does not go against Nature ; it follows and accelerates the law of Nature which is by itself inclined to move towards Self-realisation. The Tantric yoga is the way of rising above the lower nature with the help of the higher nature. In the evolution of the person the evil comes into the picture not because of the Nature itself but because of the interference of the ego in the natural process. Nature completely left by itself, is inclined to move towards goodness (*śivatva*), for nature is the manifestation of the 'Good' or 'Benign' (*Śiva*). It is our ego which, abusing its freedom, misdirects the natural flow of activity; and this results in evil. Therefore, it is our ego and not the Nature in general that is responsible for the evil in the world.

25. Activity exists in the end too.

We have already pointed out that the Tantric Yoga as the *means* of self-realisation consists of activity ; but does activity remain even after the *end* is achieved ? In other words, the question is : does activity exist only in the *means* or is it there in the *end* also ? The answer is that activity is present in the end too, although in a different form. When the end of self-realisation is attained, activity is there in the form of līlā (sport or play). It is *spanda* or spontaneous movement of joy. It is also a synthesis of the *śreya* (the good) and the *preya* (the pleasant or joyful). It is truth-goodness-beauty (*satyam-śivam-sundaram*)—all the three in one.

The other speciality of the Tantric yoga, namely, the positive attitude towards life and the world, means two things. First, it means accepting the worldly desires (*vāsanā*) and objects of *bhoga* (enjoyment), and treating them in such a way as to move towards sublimation. Secondly, it means having the attitude that everything of the world is divine (*Śiva-rūpa*).

26. The meaning of the positive attitude.

The two meanings are inter-related. We have already pointed out that the Tantric wisdom consists in mastering nature with the help of the law of nature itself. Desires are natural. and the sublimation of desires too is equally natural. The carnal desires which are generally taken to be base, can be made to flow through higher channels in a transformed and sublimated way. The Tantric tradition has discovered the method or yoga of transforming the desires by deliberate effort. There may appear to be varieties of this method or different shades of this yoga, but all of them aim at the same object, namely, sublimation. The Tantric object regarding the basic

27. The idea of sublimation.

desires is neither to waste them in *bhoga* (which the ordinary people at the animal level do) nor to reject them as something alien (which the ascetic does), but to transform them into better and higher. For so doing we will have to first accept them. They are the material or stuff which will be used for transformation in order that they express themseleves in highly

desirable forms and give more energy. It is, therefore unwise to reject the material itself. Moreover, we cannot kill the desires or eliminate the material ; we can only transform or sublimate them.

This is the reason why the Tantra advocates the *sādhanā* of the *Kaula-mārga* or *Vāma-mārga*. We have already discussed the significance of the *Kaula-sādhanā* in detail,[1] and therefore we need not mention it here again. It must suffice to say here that the basic desires (of which sex-desire is perhaps the most powerful and the most important one) are accepted in the Tantra as currents of energy originating from one and the same basic source, *Citi-Śakti* or *Kuṇḍalinī*. The Tantra aims at controlling and regulating these currents so that they flow through sublimer channels, and yield better results. The sex-desire in particular is fully and easily sublimated by the Tantric yoga.

28. The reverential attitude towards the world.

To have a reverential attitude towards the beings and the things of the world, that is, to feel that everything of the world is Śiva or divine (*Śiva-bhāvanā*), is actually one of the means of the Sublimation of desires. By having such an attitude we are not incited for indulgence ; on the contrary the desire to indulge is satisfied and sublimated.[2] That is why the Tantra advocates this attitude as a form of *sādhanā*. This attitude is extended to sex etc.[3], which are generally condemned and taken to be unholy. We have already discussed the significance of this attitude.[4]

29. The universal love.

Another means of the sublimation of desires is to cultivate the feeling of oneness (love) with the entire world. The world and the desire for the objects of the world are the free expression of our real Self, and therefore the world is our own. It will be unwise to try to transcend the world by rejecting and condemning it ;

1. See 'Significance of the Vāma-mārga', (Pages 60-82).
2. See page 64-65.
3. See page 63-64.
4. See 'Positive Attitude Towards the World', pp. 43-47.

rather we can more successfully do this by loving it and making it our own. The desires are like our kith and kin; we can win our kith and kin by loving them and not by making them our enemies. This is why the Tantra prescribes the cultivation of universal love for the attainment of freedom. We have already seen that in the *kaula-sādhanā* the sex-object is loved as one's own being, for it is love which really sublimates sex.[1]

30. The Tantric yoga is complementary to the the *Pātañjala* yoga.

Thus we see that the Tantric yoga which aims at the awakening of ***Kuṇḍalinī***, consists of two things, namely, (i) a particular technique of facilitating the flow of ***Kuṇḍalinī***, derived in a combined way from *Haṭha-yoga* (*āsana*, *prāṇāyāma*, etc.) and *Rāja-yoga* (*dhyāna*, etc.); and (ii) a general way of life which is marked with the positive attitude towards life and the world. (This again helps in the awakening of ***Kuṇḍalinī***).

By prescribing a positive way of life for Self-realisation the Tantric yoga really complements the *Pātañjala* yoga which lays stress on the negative side only.

1. See pp. 69—71.

Appendix-4

ŚAKTI AS VĀK (SPEECH)

One of the significant points of the Tantric treatment of Śakti is the conception of Śakti as *Vāk* (speech) and the entire Creation as the manifestation of *Vāk*. The *Vâk* (or *Vāk-śakti*) is said to have four hierarchical levels or stages called *Parā*, *Paśyantī*, *Madhyamā* and *Vaikharī*, which are actually the co-relates of the different levels of creation.

1. Somānanda's criticism of the Grammarian.

In the philosophical tradition of the Grammarian (*vaiyākaraṇa*) the ultimate reality, Brahman, is conceived as 'Word' (*Śabda* or *Śabda-brahma*), and the world is conceived as the creation of *Śabda*. *Bhartṛhari* is his *Vākyapadīyam* advocates the view that the world is an apparent creation (*vivarta*) of the Śabda-brahma. *Somānanda*, the father philosopher of the *Pratyabhijñā* school (Kāśmīra Śaivism), in his *Śivadṛṣṭi*, however, criticises the Grammarian. Somānanda's point is that if the Śabda is understood as a reality different from and independent of consciousness (*Cit*), it is incapable of creating the world; it can create the world only if it is understood as non--different from Consciousness or Śiva; and therefore Consciousness (*Cit*), and not *Śabda* (word), should be regarded as the ultimate principle of Creation. But this criticism made by Somānanda does not really apply to the Grammarian, for the Grammarian already implicitly (if not explicitly) accepts the Śabda as non--different from Consciousness or Śiva. Somānanda seems to have missed the intention of the Grammarian.

2. Why Śakti is called *Vāk* (Speech).

It is significant to note why Śakti is called 'speech' (*vāk*) in the Tantric tradition. In order to understand why śakti is called 'speech' we must first understand why Śakti is called '*vimarśa*' (thinking or ideation). Idealism is the prominent tone of the Tantras; according to them, Consciousness alone is the reality. Matter does not exist; what is known as

matter is really the appearance (*ābhāsa* or projection) of Consciousness. Since matter is non-existent, there is no material activity; all activity is activity in consciousness or 'mental' so to say. Activity 'in consciousness' or 'mental' activity means thinking or ideation which is the literal meaning of the word '*vimarśa*'. This is the reason why Śakti which means activity or *kriyā*, is called '*vimarśa*'. Furthermore, according to Tantrism, all thinking is in language; we cannot think without using language.[1] And since language in its express form is phonetical, it is called '*vāk*' (speech) or '*nāda*' (sound) or '*śabda*' (word). Abhinavagupta says that *śabda* is the very life of *vimarśa*.[2]

Since the world is a manifestation of *Śakti* or *Citi* (Consciousness) and since *Śakti* is understood as *Vāk* (Speech or Word), it is very well understandable that the world is the manifestation of the *Vāk*.[1] The world is a result of the spontaneous flutter or dynamism of Consciousness (Śiva), and all dynamism of consciousness is in language (vāk). The *Vāk* (sound) may not be articulate at the higher levels of *Madhyamā*, *Paśyantī* and *Parā*; it becomes articulate at the gross *Vaikharī* level only. Thinking is *silent* talking, and therefore the *vāk*

3. The world is the manifestation of the *Vāk*.

1. The very starting point of the philosophical position of the Grammarian is the discovery that thinking is linguistic. Bhartṛhari says, "There is no conception or thought which is devoid of language; all knowledge is illumined as if penetrated by speech (or language)."

न सोऽस्ति प्रत्ययो लोके यः शब्दानुगमादृते ।
अनुविद्धमिव ज्ञानं सर्वं शब्देन भासितम् ॥
na so'sti pratyayo loke yaḥ śabdānugamādṛte.
anuviddhamiva jñānaṁ sarvaṁ śabdena bhāsitam.

Vākyapadīyam 1/123.

Kālidāsa in his *Mālavikāgnimitram* (2nd act) uses the word 'inner speech' (*antarvacana*) for the inner feeling or thought (अङ्गैरन्तर्निहितवचनैः—angairantarnihitavacanaiḥ).

२. विमर्शश्च शब्दजीवितः ।
Vimarśaśca śabdajīvitaḥ-IPV 2/3/2 (p. 70).

at the higher levels may be in the form of inner speech or speech without articulation. When it is said that creation is caused by *Śabda*, what is meant by *Śabda* is not the articulate sound but the inner Consciousness which is *śabdātmaka* (expressing itself in language). Of course, the articulate sound is the grossest manifestation of the *Vāk*, and is called '*Vaikharī*' Vāk.

4. The *Parā* as the Absolute.

Parā which is the ultimate consciousness, is independent ; it is the Absolute. It is the source of Creation and yet is in itself beyond Creation. It is quite logical that the source from which the world comes, should itself be independent of the world. That is why it is called 'Parā' (the Transcendent). But it should not be merely transcendent lest it becomes unconnected with the world; it should also be immanent. The *Parā-vāk* is immanent in the form of *Paśyantī*, *Madhyamā* and *Vaikharī*. In other words, the same *Parā* manifests itself in the form of *Paśyantī*, etc.[1]

In the *Parā* state the Self alone is there ; the Creation has not taken place. So, there is only 'Aham' (the Self or 'I') ; there is no 'idam' (the object). *Parā*, therefore, is the level of pure unity ; there is no difference there. It is one without the second. Considered from the point of view of thirty six categories *(tattvas)*, Parā is the ultimate *Śiva-Śakti* which is the source of all Creation, and which in itself is above all Creation. Considered from the point of view of '*śakti*', *Parā* is *Cit-Ānanda* which is the *svarūpa-śakti* (nature of Reality).

'...the world is the manifestation of the Vāk.'[1] as in page 160, refer the following foot-note :

1. In the Bible the world is said to have come from the 'Word'. "Before the world was created, the Word already existed ; he was with God. From the very beginning the Word was with God. Through him God made all things ; not one thing in all creation was made without him. The Word was the source of life, and this life brought light to mankind "

Good News Bible ; John 1/1-5 (p. 118).

1. स्वसंविद्सिद्धायां यैव परावाग्भूमिः सैव..................पश्यन्त्यादिदशास्वपि वस्तुतो व्यवस्थिता, तया विना पश्यन्त्यादिषु अप्रकाशतापत्त्या जडताप्रसङ्गात् ।

PTV-1 (p. 4.).

It should be clearly understood that the Parā-Vāk (or Parā-śakti) is identical to the *Paramaśiva*. If Parā-śakti is taken to denote a reality different from the *Parama-Śiva*, it would be a gross misunderstanding of the Tantric position. Śiva or Consciousness is conceived as force or dynamic power (*Śakti* or *spanda*), and the very dynamism of Śiva is called Śak*ti*. Śak*ti*, therefore, is synonymous to Śiva ; it is really the way of understanding Śiva (Consciousness) as force or sentient energy. So, call it Śiva or call it Śakti–the Reality is the same.[1] Utpaladeva says that the Absolute Consciousness (*Citi*) whose nature is 'thinking' or ideational dynamism (P*ratyavamarśa*), is the Parā-Vāk.[2]

5. The Parā is the state of the absolute self-consciousness (*pūrṇ-āhantā*).

The Parā is the state of self-consciousness (*aham* or 'I am') without the consciousness of the object (*ahamidam* or 'I am this'). Here, the question of the consciousness of the world does not arise as there is no world there—the world has not arisen in any form whatsoever. There is only '*Aham*' (the 'I'—the Self or the Subject) and no '*idam*' (the 'this'—the not-self or the object). This is the absolute 'I' (*pūrṇāham* or *pūrṇāhantā*) as it is not related to or dependent on the consciousness of the 'thou' or the object. We have already showed that self-consciousness is possible even in the absence of duality.[3]

6. Ceation is the freedom of the *parā*-śakti.

The manifestation of the world or the '*idam*' is the freedom (*svātantrya*) of the '*Aham*' or the Absolute. There is a misunderstanding of the Tantric position that Creation is a logical implication or necessary outcome of Śiva or Śakti. This misunderstanding is based on such Tantric statements as

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1. We have pointed out in the very beginning that 'Śiva' and 'Śakti' are *two* in connotation only ; in denotation the two are one and the same, and, therefore, the reality is one and the same. See page 2.

2. Citiḥ pratyavamarśātmā parā vāk svarasoditā.

चितिः प्रत्यवमर्शात्मा परा वाक् स्वरसोदिता ।

IPK 1/5/13

3. See page 11-13.

that the world is the nature (*Svabhāva*) of Śiva-Śakti or that Śiva out of His sport (*līlā*) again and again creates, preserves and destroys the world (*Carīkarti barībharti sañjarīharti līlayā* चरीकर्ति बरीभर्ति सञ्जरीहर्ति लील्या). [1]

But that the Creation is the nature of Śiva (or *Parā-śakti*) is said in the same sense as when we say that playing is the nature of the child. This does not mean that playing is a necessity or compulsion on the child or that the child is playing all the twenty four hours. It simply means that there is no cause or motive of the play; it is just natural of the child to play. It does not also contradict the fact that the act of playing is the freedom of the child. We can very well say on the one hand that playing is the freedom of the child, and on the other hand that playing is the nature of the child or that the child always keeps to playing. When it is said that Creation is the nature of Śiva, it simply means that for Creation there is no motive or cause on the part of Śiva; Creation arises out of His free sportive nature,[2] and Śiva always does that out of His freedom.

If we take Creation to be a necessary act of Śiva (or Śakti), it will go against the concept of '*Svātantrya*' (freedom) which is

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1. Utpaladeva in his Śivastotrāvali offers his salutations to Śiva as One who *always* does the acts of creation, preservation and destruction out of his sportive nature.

सदा सृष्टिविनोदाय सदा स्थितिसुखाशिने ।
सदा त्रिभुवनाहारतृप्ताय स्वामिने नमः ॥

Sadā sṛṣṭivinodāya sadā sthitisukhāśine
sadā tribhuvanāhāratṛptāya svāmine namaḥ.

Śivastotrāvali 20/.9

2. The Advaita-Vedānta system has the proclaimed view that Creation is an accidental characteristic (*taṭasthalakṣaṇa*) of Brahman; and yet the father-Advaitin, Gauḍapāda, says, "This (Creation) is the nature of the Lord; what shall a perfect being desire ? (devasyaiṣa svabhāvoyam āptakāmasya kā spṛhā— देवस्यैष स्वभावोऽयम् आप्तकामस्य का स्पृहा–*Māṇḍūkya-kārikā* 1/9)". Naturally he means that in the Lord there is no motive for Creation; he cannot mean that Creation is a necessary act of Brahman.

basic in Tantrism. Moreover, the Tantras declare the Creation to be the freedom (*svātantrya*) of Śiva in unequivocal terms. Furthermore, Śiva (or *Śiva-Śakti*) is basically regarded as '*anuttara*' (transcendent). Śiva cannot be *anuttara* if Creation is a necessity on Him.

7. 'Śakti' and 'svarūpaśakti'.

The misunderstanding that Creation is a necessary act of Śiva, is also based on the overlooking of the distinction between the '*śakti*' and the '*svarūpa*'-*śakti*. In the Tantric tradition *Cit* and *Ānanda* are said to be the *svarūpa* (nature) or the *svarūpa-śakti*; whereas the triad of *icchā-jñāna-kriyā* which pertains to the creation of the world, is said to be 'śakti' (power) and not '*svarūpa*'-*śakti*. What is meant is that Cit and Ā*nanda* are the '*svarūpa*; but the triad of *icchā-jñāna-kriyā* or the Creation of the world is not *svarūpa* in the technical sense of *svarūpa-lakṣaṇa*. Creation is based just on the freedom of the Lord. He may do the cosmic function of Creation etc. always or He may do it for some time or He may not do it at all.

Ordinarily it is so understood that because in Tantrism the world is said to be Ś*akti* or *Kriyā* and further because Śakti or Kriyā is said to be the nature of *Ś*iva, the world should be regarded as the nature of Śiva. But what is overlooked here is the truth that only Cit-Ānanda—and not all Śakti—is the nature (*svarūpa*) of Śiva; *icch*ā-jñā*na-kriy*ā which results in Creation, is not the *svarūpa* in the technical sense. The activity (*Kriyā*) which is at the *svarūpa* level (*Cit-ānanda*), and which is illumined in itself, is '*Aham*' ('I am') only[1]; it is not '*Ahamidam*' ('I am this') which comes only at the level of Creation (*icch*ā-jñā*na-kriy*ā). '*Aham*' or self-consciousness, therefore, is said to be the eternal activity or eternal dynamism (*nitya-kriyā* or *nitya-spanda*) of Consciousness (Śiva). The free act of Creaton too may in courtesy be said to be '*nitya*' or even '*svarūpa*' in the sense that Śiva freely always performs the cosmic functions of creation, etc. The main point is that Creation is not a necessity or compulsion

1. यत् इयं स्वचमत्कृतिमयी स्वात्मन्येव प्रकाशनमये विश्रम्य स्फुरति तदेवं स्फुटितमविच्छिन्नता परमार्थम् 'अहम्' इति ।—PTV-1 (p. 6)

on Śiva; it is just His freedom (*svātantrya*). It is meaningless to say that Śiva may not be *Cit-Ānanda*, for Śiva is nothing but *Cit-Ānanda*; whereas it is perfectly meaningful to say that Śiva *may not* create the world. Creation completely depends upon the will of Śiva.

8. The *Paśyantī*.

When the *Parā* wills to create the world, it becomes *Paśyantī*. The *Paśyantī* state is compared to the 'swelling' (*ucchūnatā*) of a seed, which is the first step in the creation of a tree. In the 'swelling' the seed becomes as if 'inclined' (*unmukha*) towards manifesting itself in the form of a tree, the tree still being potentially contained in this stage. Similarly, in the *Paśyantī-daśā* (the state of *Paśyantī*) the world lies in the potential form, as this is simply the state of willing to create (or manifest) and not of actually creating the world. When the Upaniṣads speak of Brahman as that 'He willed – I am alone, let myself become many and procreate,'[1] this is actually the *Paśyantī-daśā* of Brahman. So, from the point of view of the *pañcaśaktis* (five powers of Śiva) the *Paśyantī* is the *icchā* (will), the first step in the triad of *icchā-jñāna-kriyā* which is the actual process of Creation. That is why in the hierarchy of the *Tattvas* the *Paśyantī* is the state of *Sadāśiva*; Sadāśiva just wills (*icchā*) to create.

9. The state of unity-in-difference.

Considered from the point of view of unity and difference, *Paśyantī* is the state of 'unity-in-difference' (ahamidam–'I am this'). The succeeding states of *Madhyamā* and *Vaikharī* too are the states of unity-in-difference. The difference among the three states of 'unity-in-difference' is based on the more and more actualisation of the difference within the unity itself. In the *Paśyantī-daśā* the difference is the least proclaimed, in the *Madhyamā* it becomes more proclaimed as it is more actualised, whereas in the *Vaikharī* the difference is fully actualised or externalised. The *Paśyantī* state is analogous to the undifferentiated fluid in the egg of a peacock (*mayūrāṇḍarasa*), where the variety of the coloured

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1. Sa aikṣata ekoham bahusyām prajāyeya iti.

स ऐक्षत एकोऽहम् बहुस्याम् प्रजायेय इति ।

plumes of the peacock is fully submerged in the undifferentiated unity of the egg, and yet the difference is potentially contained therein. In this state the desired object exists just in the form of initial consciousness.[1] The distinction between the word (*vācaka*) and the object (*vācya*) has not yet arisen; the two exist in undifferentiated form.[2] The consciousness of the object (*idam*) has sprouted, but it still lies undifferentiated from the subject (*aham*).

10. The *Madhyamā*.

Madhyamā is the second step in the process of creation. This state of *Vāk* or Consciousness is grosser or lower than that of the *Paśyantī*, and subtler or higher than that of the *Vaikharī*. That is why it is called '*Madhyamā*' which literally means 'the middle one.' In this state the world is more manifest than in the *Paśyantī-daśā*.

Considered from the point of view of the *pañcaśaktis*, *Madhyamā* is the state of '*jñāna*' (ideation)[3] Here the would-be world comes as clear idea, it no longer remains in the form of the

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1. ततस्तु पश्यन्ती यद्यत् अभीप्सितं तत्तदेव समुचितकारणनियमप्रबोधितं बोधसूत्रमात्रेण विमृशति ।— PTV-1 (p. 4)
2. नहि प्रथमज्ञानकाले भेदोऽत्र अस्फुरत्, यतः वाच्यवाचकविशेषयोः अभेदः —PTV-1 (p. 4)
3. There is sometimes a misunderstanding regarding the meaning of '*icchā-jñāna-kriyā*.' The non-technical people sometimes understand by it what is called 'knowing-willing-feeling' which are the three faculties of the mind. But this is a misunderstanding of the terms. The '*icchā*', '*jñāna*' and '*kriyā*' are the three hierarchical steps of creation, which are found in any creation whatsoever. When an architect constructs a building, he first 'wills' to construct. This is '*icchā*'. Then the entire picture or idea of the would-be building comes in his mind; the building is erected in his mind in the form of clear idea. This is '*jñāna*'. Then he actually constructs the building—the building comes into the physical existence. This is '*kriyā*'. In the creation of the universe too the Lord first wills to create (*icchā*) ; then the entire picture of the would-be universe clearly comes in the Śiva-consciousness as ideation

'will' to create; but it still remains as idea and has not yet become the actual 'physical' reality (which comes in the *kriyā*-state).[1] From the point of view of '*Tattvas*' the *Madhyamā* is the *Īśvara-tattva* which is the co-relate of '*jñāna*' in the triad of *icchā-jñāna-kriyā*. This is the state of what is called '*idamaham*' ('this I am'). This too is within the general frame-work of unity-in-difference, but here there is an emphasis on the difference ('Idam' or 'this') as it (the difference) is more manifest or more proclaimed. The subject fully ideates the object (the object being contained in the subject as 'idea'). The *Paśyantī* is the *beginning* of the difference (*bheda*), whereas Madhyamā is the full awareness of the difference (although within oneself)'.[2]

11. The Vaikharī.

Vaikharī is the grossest manifestation of the *Vāk-śakti*. In this state the world is fully actualised; it no longer remains as 'thinking' or 'ideation' (*vimarśa* or *jñāna*)—as in the *Madhyamā* state—but becomes actual or external reality. Considered from the point of view of the *pañcaśaktis*, *Vaikharī* is '*kriyā*' which is the actual creation as the physical world. According to the realistic interpretation of *Vaikharī* or *Kriyā*, the world which is created externally, is a real

(*jñāna*) ; and finally He actually creates the universe by bringing it into visible existence (*kriyā*).

It should also be noted that the terms '*jñāna*' and '*kriyā*' are not used here in the general sense of illumination and dynamism which are the connotations of Śiva and Śakti. They are used here in the special sense of the steps of creation. When anything to be created comes in the mind as idea, it is '*jñāna*'; and when it is actually created as external reality, it is '*kriyā*'. So, '*jñāna*' is the internal or 'mental' creation of anything as idea, and '*kriyā*' is the external or 'physical' creation of the same.

1. मध्यमा पुनः तयोरेव वाच्यवाचकयो : भेदमादर्श्य सामानाधिकरण्येन विमर्श-व्यापारा । —PTV-1 (p. 5)

2. पश्यन्त्यां यत्र भेदांशस्यासूत्रणं, यत्र च मध्यमायां भेदावभासः……………… —Ibid 1 (p. 6.).

or material entity. But according to the idealistic interpretation (which is held by Tantrism in general and Kāśmīra Śaivism in particular), the world manifested at the level of *Vaikharī* or *Kriyā*, is an appearance (*ābhāsa*) and not a material reality. At the *Madhyamā* level the world is 'ideation' (*vimarśa* or '*jñāna*'), and at the *vaikharī* or *kriyā* level it is 'appearance' (*ābhāsa*). The difference between 'ideation' (vimarśa) and 'appearance' (*ābhāsa*) is this : 'ideation' is mere conceiving or thinking anything within the 'mind' or consciousness as mere idea or imagination; whereas 'appearance' is the actual projection (although false) as what happens in the case of hallucination or dream. In 'ideation' a thing is merely imagined, but in 'appearance' the thing actually appears as a real entity (just as in a dream).

Of course, in the case of hallucination or dream we are in ignorance—we do not know that it is appearance; whereas Śiva knows that His creation is just an appearance and not a material entity. His creation is more like that of a *yogī* or a magician who creates false appearances and at the same time is fully aware that the created things are false. Or it is like a cinema-show which is a false projection—we know that it is false and yet we see and enjoy it.

Considered from the angle of the *Tattvas*, *Vaikharī* is the *Sad-vidyā-tattva*. In the *Sad-vidyā* state the world is fully actualised or externalised. The object comes out of the subject, so to say, and stands as if at par with the subject.[1] That is why it is the state of '*aham ca idam ca*' ('I am and this is'). The difference is fully proclaimed—so much so that it appears as if independent of the unity which is the knower (the subject). But although it appears as independent of the knowing Self, the Self (*Śiva*) is aware that it is non-different from Him.

1. वैखरी तु तदुभयभेदस्फुटतामय्येव । —PTV-1 (p.5.).

12. The process of the spoken word.

The four levels of the *Vāk-śakti* can also be understood purely in terms of the spoken word. It should be clear that the word (*śabda*) does not exist in itself without the thing (*artha*)[1] indicated by the word. Whenever we speak a word, we have the thing (*artha*) in our mind, which is the meaning of the word. The process of the word and meaning (*śabdārthaprakriyā*) is a sentient process—a process of consciousness. Therefore, this process must originate from consciousness and proceed in-and-through consciousness. The ultimate consciousness which is the source of this process and which itself is independent of this process, is the *Parā-Vāk*. When in the *Parā* state the will to speak or express an *'artha'* arises, it becomes *Paśyantī*. Here, only the will to speak the *artha* is there, the full picture or idea of the *artha* has not yet arisen—it is the beginning of the speech. In the *Madhyamā* the idea or the picture of the *artha* becomes fully clear, but it is still within the 'mind' or consciousness of the speaker—it is only 'ideated' (*vimarśana*). In the *Vaikharī-vāk* the word (*śabda*) expressing the *artha*, is articulated and becomes audible sound. Up to the *Madhyamā* level the '*śabda*' (word) remains in the thought-form; it is only at the *Vaikharī* level that the word becomes the articulate sound.

13. The *Parā-Vāk* is unaffected by the differentiations.

It should also be noted that when the *Parā* manifests itself in the form of *Paśyantī*, etc., it (*the Parā*) is not exhausted. The *Parā* remains in itself and at the same time manifests the lower levels also; it never loses its absolute nature. (इयं स्वचमत्कृतिमयी स्वात्मन्येव प्रकाशनमये विश्रम्य स्फुरति). In other words, the lower levels of *Paśyantī*, etc., are the accretion (*Prasāra*) or free manifestation (*sphuraṇa*) of the

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1. '*Artha*' primarily means the thing (*vastu*). The word stands for thing; and it is, therefore, the thing (*artha*) which gives meaning to the word—the thing (*artha*) is the meaning of the word. Hence, 'artha' secondarily means 'meaning'.

Parā-śakti itself. The Goddess says, "I myself remain as the same Goddess *Parā-vāk*, unaffected by the differentiations".[1]

The five hierarchical categories of *Śiva-Śakti*,[2] *Sadāśiva*, *Īśvara* and *Sadvidyā*, classified under the four co-relate levels of the *Vāk-śakti*, are said to be pure categories (*śuddhādhvā*). They are pure (*śuddha*) because the sense of non-duality is never forsaken even at the lowest level of the *sad-vidyātattva*. The *Parā-śakti*, although manifesting itself in duality, is always aware that the duality is Her own manifestation and that She is ever the non-dual absolute reality.

The four hierarchical levels of the *Vāk-śakti* can be likened to the different procreative stages of a mother. When the mother has not yet conceived and is completely in herself, this is like the *Parā* state. When she just conceives (the stage of fertilization), this is like *Paśyantī*. When the foetus attains the full form and is still within the embryo, this is like *Madhyamā*. Finally, when the mother gives birth to the baby (that is, when the baby comes out of the womb), this is like the *Vaikharī*. The cosmic Mother (*Parā-śakti* or *Parā-vāk*) conceives the world in the form of willing or *icchā* (Paśyantī) ; she develops the conception into a full-fledged foetus within the womb of consciousness in the form of ideation or '*jñāna*' (*Madhyamā*); and finally she actually gives birth to the world in the form of '*kriyā*' (*Vaikharī*).

Even after giving birth to the child and even after the child appearing as different from her, the mother fully knows that the child is her own and is non-different from her. Similarly, the Cosmic Mother is aware of the non-duality even after projecting the world outside which eventhough remains in Her fold.

The following chart may be of some help in viewing the four levels of the *Vāk-śakti* through different angles.

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1. अहमेव सा परावाग्देवीरूपैव सर्ववाच्यवाचकाविभक्ततया एवमुवाच ।
—PTV-1 (p. 9).

2. Although Śiva and Śakti are numbered as two in the hierarchy of the thirty six categories, they are one and the same. They are two only connotatively; denotatively they are one single reality. Therefore, the *two* are classified under one and the same level of Reality, namely, the *Parā*.

Parā	Śiva-Śakti	Cit-Ānanda	Aham ('I am'.)	Pure Unity	Pure Subject (Pure Self)
Paśyantī	Sadāśiva	Icchā	Ahamidam ('I am this.')	Unity-in-difference [difference in the potential form (āsūtraṇa)]	The Subject just sprouting the object.
Madhyamā	Īśvara	Jñāna	Idamaham ('This I am.')	Unity-in-difference [difference more manifest as ideation (vimarśa)]	The Subject fully 'ideating' the object.
Vaikharī	Sadvidyā	Kriyā	Ahañca idañca ('I am and this is.')	Unity-in-difference [difference fully manifest as appearance (ābhāsa)]	The Subject externally projecting the object as ābhāsa.

INDEX

Select Bibliography

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OPINIONS

"Ultimately based on the Upaniṣads the Tantra tradition owes its specific features to the Āgamas (Tantras) and its own elucidation and elaboration of them. Although the Tantra advocates an Absolutism of the unity of Śiva (Being) and Śakti (Act), it would be wrong to identify it with the Brahman Absolutism of the Advaita-Vedānta. The latter conceives Consciousness as essentially *Prakāśa* (passive knowledge), whereas the Tantra philosophy of Kashmir Saivism takes the Absolute as an inseparable unity of knowledge and pure act or as consciousness which is at once self-consciously aware of itself. Emphasis is on pure or free activity rather than passive reception.

By a trenchant criticism of the Advaita position Shri Kamalakar Mishra eminently succeeds in vindicating the soundness and significance of Kashmir Saivism. His contention that *kriyā* (free act) unfettered by empirical limitations and consequences deserves to be distinguished from *karma* which is the ego's choice and free will, is commendable. He also finds out that the empirical world need not be considered as illusory appearance of Brahman, but as the free play or sport (*Līlā*) of Śiva. Pursuit of ordinary worldly enjoyment (*Bhoga*) is not necessarily antagonistic to the achievement of freedom from suffering (*Mukti*).

One may legitimately differ from Mishra's contentions on many of the topics ; but we have to accept the value of the 'Significance of the Tantric Tradition'. In a short compass of less than one hundred and seventy pages he has succeeded in giving a very lucid and well reasoned exposition of the Tantric tradition. I consider it a valuable contribution to the subject."

T. R. V. Murti
Emeritus Professor of Philosophy,
Banaras Hindu University ; and
Ex-Director, Centre of
Advanced Study in Philosophy, B. H. U.

February 13, 1982.

"I have gone through Shri Kamalakar Mishra's 'Significance of the Tantric Tradition' from cover to cover. In a short compass of 171 pages Shri Mishra has dealt with every important philosophical aspect of the Tantric tradition with a thoroughness that compels admiration.

The book is divided into three parts, viz., Philosophical Significance of the Tantric Tradition, the Religious and Cultural Significance of the Tantric Tradition and Some Other Questions Regarding Tantra. In the first part, the ontological significance of Ś*akti* and axiological significance of Pratyabhijñā have been fully expounded ; in the second part, the compatibility of *Jñāna* and *Kriyā* and of *Bhukti* and *Mukti* has been carefully examined, and in the third part, the characteristics of Tantric epistemology and Tantric yoga have been fully and clearly described.

Thus the book has given to the reader an insight into the contribution of Tantra in its three aspects of Ontology, Epistemology and Axiology. It will, therefore, be of immense value to all seekers of truth of the arcana of the Tantric tradition."

—Jaideva Singh, M. A., D. Litt.,
Padmabhushana.

"The present work gives with considerable clarity, understanding and insight the quintessence of the Tantric tradition. The author deserves our thanks for presenting a scholarly and reasoned account of the fundamental ideas of the Tantric metaphysics, epistemology and yoga in a small and handy volume. It should kindle a fresh interest in the readers in the great and rich Tantric heritage which has enriched immeasurably the Vedic tradition and moulded the life and culture of the Hindus through the ages."

—Dr. R. S. Mishra
Professor & Head : Deptt. of Philosophy,
Banaras Hindu University.

"The time has come for a more general survey of the Tantric tradition and a deeper analysis and logical exposition of the basic concepts of the Tantric philosophy. In this work an attempt has been made to present the Tantric philosophy in general and the *Pratyabhijñā* philosophy in particular in a critical, comparative and systematic manner. Besides clear explanation of the key-concepts of Tantric philosophy, a remarkable epistemological analysis is discernible in this work. The author shows a brilliant insight in expounding the Tantric position. He gives the clue for clearly apprehending the Tantric wisdom.

Shri Kamalakar Mishra deserves our thanks for his commendable effort providing such a reasoned and lucid exposition of the Tantric philosophy in general and the *Pratyabhijñā* philosophy (Kashmir Saivism) in particular. The exposition is enlightening both to the scholars and the laymen. This work is a unique contribution to the Tantric literature."

—Dr. K. D. Tripathi
Director, Kalidasa Academy
Ujjain (M. P.)

"The study of the Tantras, neglected for a long time, needs the attention of scholars as well as of the laymen. It is specially significant today when mankind is facing the crisis of the dis-integration of personality. The author deserves our thanks for ably bringing into light the wisdom of the Tantras.

The most difficult and esoteric concepts of the Tantra have been explained by the author in the simplest way; clarity of presentation is an important feature of the present work. Moreover, the Tantric standpoint has been discussed in a logical and rational manner. The author's treatment of the Tantric *Sādhanā* using sex is really enlightening. The entire work reveals the originality of the author"

—Dr. L. N. Sharma
(author of 'Kashmir Saivism')
Deptt. of Philosophy,
B. H. U., Varanasi.

For some time now, I had been on the lookout for a clear, objective and concise introduction to Tantric thought. My acquaintance with Tantra especially as it is dealt with in Kashmir Śaivism was not deep. Still from the little I knew I could sense its depth and breadth, Abhinavagupta's commentary on Dhvanyāloka had revealed to me his greatness and versatility. What I needed was a sure guide who would open me the riches of this most fascinating Indian religious and philosophical tradition.

Just a couple of months back, I came across Dr. Kamalakar Mishra's "Significance of the Tantric Tradition". It is a short yet comprehensive, concise yet sufficiently explanatory, simple yet profound book, The clarity of thought and presentation, the knowledge of the source material and the scrupulous objectivity of approach deserve all praise. As an Introduction to Tantric thought, it has all the qualities to be a vade-mecum for our students of Philosophy.

Dr. Mishra seems to be a born teacher. He explains the most abstruse philosophical points with telling examples. The basic tenets of Tantra are made clear by comparing and contrasting them with Advaitic teachings.

A few points which specially attract me in the book, deserve mention here. The usual western complaint that Indian thought is world-negating appears very one-sided when one is in contact with Kashmir Śaivism. Even the "Jīvanmukta" is a person who actively works for the welfare of the world. Jñāna and Kriyā are not two separate paths. When our country is desperately looking for a world-affirming philosophy that will undergird her developmental efforts, what significant insights Kashmir Śaivism can offer us! The perceptive remarks of Dr. Mishra on "Kaulism", I consider very important. Many good people are kept away from Tantric thought because of misunderstandings.

There are many other important points that deserve our attention and study in the book. I hope to take them up in a detailed review at a later stage.

(Fr.) Ignatius Puthiadam

There is hardly any systemic philosophical treatise (in English) on Tantra, and absolutley none that can be used as a philosophical 'text book'. Shri Kamalakar Mishra's *Significance of the Tantric Tradition* amply caters to both the needs. He has deliberately written a style that any educated man can follow, and yet the work is technical philosophy all through.

Wisely enough, He has confined himself to presenting Kashmira Śaivism, specially as it was developed by Abhinavagupta, and has left no important concept of this Śaivism untouched. Śaivism, particularly of this Kashmira type, is integral dynamic philosophy, certified, as all spiritual philosophy is, throughout by actual and possible *experience* and yet systematically presentable in conceptual language. Shri Mishra has presented this Kashmira Śaivism from all these points of view. That is why he has divided the book into three parts and dealt with Tantra metaphysics in the first, *Jñāna-kriyā-bhukti-mukti* in the second part and Tantrika epistemology and yoga in the third part.

In the preface he writes : "Our endeavour in the present work is to spell out implicit ideas, to make explicit the inner thread of logic in the Tantric system, and to fill up the missing gaps if possible". He has eminently succeeded in this triple task.

Two most remarkable features of the book are : (i) his complete mastery of the basic concepts of Tantra (so much so that he could present all the intricacies in an easily intelligible common-sense language) and (ii) his healthy sense of the exact position that logic and epistemology —and even yogic techniques—occupy in Śaivism, particularly of the Kashmir type of Abhinavagupta. His occasional but very appropriate references to Western philosophy are also worth noting.

I wish he had touched, briefly though and by way of comparison only, other forms of Saivism and Śākta and Vaishnava Tantra.

Kalidas Bhattacharya
Professor Emeritus, Visva-Bharati, Formerly
Director, Centre of Advanced Study in
Philosophy, Visva-Bharati.

"..........By a trenchant criticism of the Advaita position Shri Kamalakar Mishra eminently succeeds in vindicating the soundness and significance of Kashmir Saivism ....In a short compass of less than 170 pages he has succeeded in giving a very lucid and well reasoned exposition of the Tantric tradition. I consider it a valuable contribution to the subject."

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Jaideva Singh
M. A., D. Litt., Padmabhushana

".........I am sure that those interested in Tantra will look upon this book as an excellent addition to their library. .... Probably it is for the first time that the Tantric tradition has been explained in this cogent and consistent manner........ Shri Mishra has attained a high degree of excellence.........There is no doubt that he has earned the gratitude of scholars by giving such a clear, coherent and cogent account of a difficult tradition of thought."

R. K. Tripathi, M. A., D. Litt.,
Professor & Ex-Director, Centre of Advanced
Study in Philosophy, and Ex-Head of the
Deptt. of Philosophy, B. H. U.
(extract from the 'Foreword')

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